

**UNMASKING VIOLATIONS AGAINST HUMAN DIGNITY  
IN SELECTED AFRIKAANS FILMS IN SOUTH AFRICA  
1960-1976:  
A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION**

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## **Declaration**

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## Abstract

Three Afrikaans films were released in South Africa during the tumultuous apartheid years (1960-1976) with the focus on the Afrikaner identity, the policy of apartheid and the injustices suffered by its people as a result, specifically focussing on the so-called Coloured community. These films were received with enthusiasm by the mostly Afrikaans viewers, but a dissonance became clear between the “message” delivered by these films and the perception of the content of the films by the public.

Human dignity, and its relation to human rights, is offered as a theoretical tool in understanding this discrepancy between message and audience. It seems as if the filmmakers understood that the social injustices they portrayed in the narratives touched on the very fibre of a person’s humanity. In uncovering these injustices, the violations that were done against the human dignity of persons and groups were clinically unmasked as the realities of the current social circumstances were offered as background. The assumption of this study is that human beings are created as *imago Dei*, in the image of God, to His glory. Violations done to the identity, relationships and the indwelling of God, to a person, violate not only the *other*, but also the own *self* as perpetrator, and most importantly, *God* (the *Other*) as the grantor and origin of the dignity of each person on earth. Four different “movements” are applied as framework for analysis in order to unmask the manifestation of violations as perpetrated against human dignity, namely *observation*, *interpretation*, *anticipation* and *transformation*. The material is analysed against the context of the historical background.

The dissonance between message and perception by audiences was found to be a consequence of the difference in perceptions of humanity and intent because of the different lenses used. The filmmaker, as artist, portrayed persons as valuable because of their “being human beings”, whereas the audiences accepted the films through the various filters that were operative in society at the time, and which acted together in preserving the value of group interest. The divergence between the view offered by the films and the filters through which they were received was too deep to offer integration, and resulted in dissonance instead.

Within any culture the artist may act as a prophet, and this role is investigated by analysing the message brought to the audiences by these artists. The impact of the artist on society may differ, depending on the lenses and filters present as a result of the openness or closeness of a society. Future studies may hopefully shed light on the way in which murky filters may become enlightening lenses in changing societies. It seems as if the dissonance may only disappear when the human glance at our reality, through the eyes of faith, becomes one with the vision of God for His Kingdom.

## Opsomming

Drie films is tussen 1960 en 1976 vanuit Afrikaner-geledere vervaardig wat indringende kommentaar en kritiek op die onregverdigde politieke bestel van apartheid gelewer het, en wat veral op die gevolge hiervan vir die sogenaamde Kleurlinge of Bruin Afrikaners gefokus het. Hierdie films is entoesiasies deur veral Afrikaanssprekende kykers ontvang, maar 'n duidelike dissonansie kan waargeneem word tussen die "boodskap" van die films en die ontvangs en verstaan daarvan deur die samelewing.

Menswaardigheid en die rol van menseregte word aangewend as 'n instrument in 'n poging om hierdie diskrepansie tussen boodskap en gehoor te verstaan. Dit lyk asof die filmvervaardiger begryp het dat die sosiale ongeregtighede wat hy in die verhale uitgebeeld het die eintlike wese van menslikheid aangeraak het. In die ontmaskering van onreg in die films word die klem op die direkte handelings in die samelewing geplaas waardeur mense se regte en menslikheid geskend en vernietig word. Die uitgangpunt vir hierdie studie is dat die mens geskape is as *imago Dei*, na die beeld van God, met menswaardigheid as 'n onvervreembare, onvernietigbare essensie van elke persoon se menswees, van syn. Hierdie menswaardigheid word geskaad wanneer die identiteit en verhoudings van mense geskaad word en ook wanneer die mens se verhouding met God deur andere verkrag word. Enige vernietiging teenoor die *ander* is essensieel ook die vernietiging van die menswaardigheid van die *self* en die *Ander*. Verskeie metodes word in die studie gebruik om die *waarneming*, *interpretasie*, *afwagting* en *transformasie* deur die filmmakers toe te pas op die realiteite van die samelewing waaroor hulle kommentaar lewer. Die analise vind teen die konteks van die geskiedkundige agtergrond plaas.

Die dissonansie wat gevind is tussen die boodskap van die films en die interpretasie daarvan deur die gehore kan beskryf word as die resultaat van verskillende persepsies omtrent die menslike natuur en gevolglik die toepassing van verskillende lense en filters. Die filmmaker het, as kunstenaar, mense uitgebeeld as waardevol omdat hulle deur God geskape is, terwyl die gehore die films deur die filters van die tydsgeselskap ontvang het. Die aanwesige filters het gesamentlik die belang van groepsbelang voorop gestel. Die verskille tussen die lens van die filmmaker en die filters van die samelewing was te wyd en diep om integrasie teweeg te bring en het intendeel 'n diepliggende dissonansie ontbloot.

Kunstenaars mag in enige kultuur aangetref word as profete en hierdie rol van die filmmaker word ondersoek in die boodskap van hierdie films. Die impak van 'n kunstenaar wissel en hang onder andere af van die openheid of geslotenheid van die samelewing waarin hy/sy werk. Toekomstige studies mag hopelik lig werp op die proses waardeur troebel filters verhelderende lense mag word in veranderende samelewings. Dit wil voorkom asof die dissonansie slegs verdwyn wanneer of indien die menslike blik op die realiteite van ons bestaan in geloof belyd word met God se visie vir sy koninkryk.

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My deepest gratitude goes to my beloved family, my daughter Bernice and my son Martin Botha, and to my most beloved husband Johan. Thank you for all the support and love throughout all my endeavours, and especially to Johan for his lifelong love, companionship, care and support; for selflessly sharing your enthusiasm and skills with me. It is a blessing beyond my wildest hopes.

To God, Creator and Truth, I owe my life and gratitude.

.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this research to my parents, Otto du Plessis and Bernice Steyl du Plessis, who taught me to look at life through the eyes of wonder.

Who taught me that every person on earth is a dignified human being, simply because God has created us and loves us.

Who taught me the wonder of God's love and the ability to accept Him through their example of living the Truth, always within the gift of gratitude.

Words will never be enough to express my gratitude for the privilege it was to have been raised, taught and loved by them.

## List of Abbreviations

ANC	African Nationalist Congress
AB	Afrikaner Broederbond
BPC	Black People's Convention
CI	Christian Institute
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
Ds	Dominee
FAK	Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings
IOC	International Olympic Committee
NT	New Testament
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OT	Old Testament
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PCB	Publications Control Board
PM	Prime Minister
Rev	Reverend
SA	South Africa
SABRA	Suid-Afrikaanse Buro vir Rasse-Aangeleenthede
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SACC	South African Communist Party
SAN-ROC	South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee
SAP	Suid-Afrikaanse Party
SASO	South African Students' Organisation
SWA	South West Africa
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation

UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UP	United Party
UWC	University of the Western Cape



## Glossary

<i>Apartheid</i>	The policy of separateness between races that became the official policy of the National Party in South Africa.
<i>Coloureds</i>	People of mixed race in South Africa, mostly living in the Western and Northern Cape.
<i>Commonwealth</i>	The body of former British Colonies, together with the United Kingdom.
<i>Dominee</i>	The Afrikaans designation for “pastor” or “reverend”.
<i>Kaffir</i>	A name traditionally given to black people in South Africa, which became a derogatory form of addressing or description.
<i>Oom</i>	An Afrikaans way of referring to an elderly man, to indicate respect.
<i>Petty apartheid</i>	The way in which apartheid was forced on people in the little ways of everyday life, such as separate restaurants, lifts, park benches.
<i>Separate development</i>	Another designation for apartheid.
<i>Sestigers</i>	The designation for the new and vigorous Afrikaner writers of the 1960s, who challenged the <i>status quo</i> by their works.
<i>Volk</i>	An emotionally and ideologically charged concept for a nation, referring mostly to the Afrikaner “volk” as a nation with a belief of being God’s chosen people.
<i>Verlig</i>	Refers to the enlightened thinkers in the Afrikaans society during the 1960s.

*Verkramp*

Refers to the conservative Afrikaners of the 1960s, who in practice wanted to keep the government policy as close as possible to apartheid.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The period 1960 to 1976 was a time of political turbulence in South Africa. The Sharpeville riots in Johannesburg during 1960 was the result of violence by black people against the hated pass laws instituted by the South African government, while the Soweto riots (1976) was a violent reaction by force against Afrikaans being forced upon all schools in South Africa (SA) as the language to be used in 50 per cent of the curriculum.<sup>1</sup>

It became clear that the political violence and unrest against the government's apartheid<sup>2</sup> laws became more focussed against the Afrikaner as entity and Afrikaans, as being the cultural group and language of the "oppressor".

During these years the fledgling South African film industry came of age with the release of a number of films in Afrikaans. These films were produced as serious dramas, in the genre not frequently utilised by South African film makers before. Together, three of these films, *Die Kandidaat*, *Katrina* and *Jannie Totsiens* constitute the golden era of Afrikaans film, as they delivered products of quality and intent which have probably not been met since. They were produced by the formidable team of Jans Rautenbach and Emil Nofal.<sup>3</sup>

These films were products from within the Afrikaans community, and as such delivered critique and comment on the manifestation of the identity of Afrikanerdom from within. They cut deeply into the identity of the power bearers, deeply into the use and abuse of power, the influence of legislation, the fault lines that lay beneath the surface and the insecurities at the bottom of this quest for identity. Most of all, these dynamic films sought to open up the eyes of the viewers to the brutally harmful and hurtful results of institutionalised apartheid on the other segments of the society, especially so to the so-called "Coloured" community.

The exclusion of people of mixed race from the Afrikaner identity, though sharing most of the culture and speaking the same language as "Afrikaners", forms a central theme throughout these films.

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<sup>1</sup> The reasons for the demarcation of the period 1960 to 1976 for this study will be fully explained and discussed further on in Chapter 1. In short, it was capped by two violent protests that both influenced changes in SA history, while the Afrikaner identity was solidified under the National Party during this period and political power was cemented in apartheid legislation.

<sup>2</sup> "Apartheid" is the term that became synonymous with the policies of the South African government after 1948.

<sup>3</sup> Two of the films were produced by Emil Nofal and directed by Jans Rautenbach, while with the third film Rautenbach acted as both producer and director.

## 1.1 Motivation

The candid, and sometimes brutal, unmasking of injustices in the society by these films exposed the violence against the human rights and human dignity of the individual within certain groups, but also against the groups as entities. It also uncovered the essential underlying and deeply dividing differences within the perceived homogenous Afrikaner identity at the time, and illustrated the impotency of individuals to effect change against a closed perception of identity and belief.

Different manifestations of violence have been unmasked by these films. Structural violence could be found where actions against the human rights and dignity of persons were legitimised by laws and regulations and thus rendered acceptable in society, while cultural violence manifested in the symbolic spheres of existence (exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical and formal sciences) and were thereby used to justify or legitimise direct or structural violence.<sup>4</sup> This study will examine how these films unmasked these various forms of violence by their use of narrative, symbols and icons, art, metaphor and allegory. The study will then investigate how the themes uncovered by these films were accepted or rejected by society as reflected in the media coverage as a mirror of society.

If these films can be shown to have successfully unmasked the essence and manifestations of systemic violations against the human dignity of persons and groups, this perception should have been understood and reflected in the response by the audience/society. The potential to impact on the perception of the viewers and to sensitise society about daily violations occurring in communities should have been reflected in the reaction by viewers in opinions, reviews and debates in the media.

## 1.2 Research Problem

Film, seen as art and therefore a product of culture, has the possibility to reflect reality on different levels and therefore also the possibility to take the audience through different perceptions of reality, and as such may impact on a viewer through different movements and open up different reactions from the audience/viewer. In this study four relevant “movements” or levels will be examined, namely the way in which the artist firstly *observed* and secondly *interpreted* reality; then, thirdly how the *anticipation* of change or hope manifested and lastly whether the possibility to *transform* reality through these films was manifested in the audience.

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<sup>4</sup> “One way cultural violence works is by changing the moral color of an act from red/wrong to green/right or at least to yellow/acceptable; an example being murder on behalf of a country as right, on behalf of oneself as wrong. Another way is by making reality opaque, so that we do not see the violent act or fact, or at least not as violent” Galtung 1990:291-292.



Clear evidence of the first three “movements” can be found in all three films, but although the potential to change the policies of the power elite at the time existed in the powerful messages of these films in unmasking abuses of human dignity, no evidence of meaningful understanding by the audiences that could influence policy changes by the government can be found.

The study will question the reasons why reaction to these films as manifested in the media at the time did not reflect a direct impact on society that could illustrate an understanding of the themes examined by the films, and why a dissonance was manifested between the “message” of the films and the understanding of the film by the audiences as reflected in the media. It seems as though the audience made very little connection between the situations exposed by the films and the reality of their everyday lives. It also seems as though no immediate meaningful influence impacted on society that could lead to transformation of the policy and actions of the government. Governance was consolidated in the Afrikaner power elite in whose hands all political power was cemented and controlled, and these Afrikaans films spoke directly to Afrikaners at the time. This dissonance between the “message” and the understanding thereof by the audience forms the central question for analyses.

The historical sources provide the context against which reaction to the films, as found in newspapers and other media sources, is viewed.

### 1.3 Research Objectives

The role of film in theological research is a relatively new field of study, with the initial publications in this field only appearing since the turn of the twenty-first century, for instance a ground-breaking study by Robert Johnston in 2000.<sup>5</sup> This study initially opened up the field for investigation of the cultural influence of film in society. The influence of film as art, therefore as a product of culture, has furthermore been examined by academics, such as in the work by Daniel Louw<sup>6</sup> and Johan Cilliers.<sup>7</sup> These works are helpful in analysing the influence on society by the films and to form links between the content of each film and the context of society.

Films in the Afrikaans language have been released since 1916 (*Die Voortrekkers*), with most of these films in the genres of history and comedy. The first serious works of quality to appear as social comment and dramas were the works by Nofal and Rautenbach during the

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<sup>5</sup> Johnston Robert K, 2000, *Reel Spirituality. Theology in Film and Dialogue. Engaging Culture*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

<sup>6</sup> Louw Daniël J, 2014, *Icons. Imaging the Unseen*. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media.

<sup>7</sup> Cilliers Johan, 2012, *Dancing with Deity. Re-Imagining the beauty of Worship*. Wellington: Bible Media.

1960s. These films commented on the then current situation in South Africa, the political and social issues of the day, with specific focus on the abuses of power, specifically institutionalised power, and on the injustices as manifested in society, which led to violations of the human dignity and rights of people.

Human beings are conceptualised as *imago Dei*, as creations by God in His own image and therefore as beings who in essence contain dignity, human dignity. This human dignity has been used as a lens in the research of these films and will be applied as conceptual tool for this study when viewing the nature of the South African society (1960–1976) and the three films. In order to achieve an analysis of the interaction of these films with society, a historical perspective on the formation of the society as well as the development of Afrikaner identity will be given as background. The development of the policy of apartheid, which also became known as *separate development*, will be viewed as a given reality against which violations of human dignity occurred.

The themes highlighted by these films include *inter alia* the role of the Afrikaans churches during those years (1960-1976), the severely destructive influence of certain apartheid laws on society, especially focussed on the so-called Coloured people, the identity crisis within the Coloured community that led to the so-called “try-for-white” manifestation, the undignified social positions of the Indians and Africans in South Africa as well as the destructive resettlement of people by the government in the process of social engineering. More themes include the way physically and mentally disabled people were treated by society, the role of the economic *status quo* in disabling and dehumanising people, the role of women in society and the manifestation of Afrikaner identity. The themes developed in each film are viewed against the social circumstances of the period and are linked to specific incidents that took place within the society.

The content of each film is discussed, analysed and applied to the society at the time in order to ascertain the relevancy of the comment offered by each film. A further analysis of the reaction by the audiences, of the direct impact perceived on the audiences and influence of the films on the viewers as reflected by their own comments, may help in finding the answer to the research question, as these aspects may shed light on the interaction between film and audience.

The aim of the analysis is to find the ground underlying the meaning that the filmmaker(s) wanted to convey through the films and the underlying perceptions and convictions of the audiences, against the background of each person being a creation of God in his image.

## 1.4 Research Methodology

This research is in the form of a literature study, and may furthermore be described as applying a process of *cinemation*, where the concept refers to the “ability to interpret the meanings created in films by the juxtaposition of images, words, music and sound.”<sup>8</sup> The analysis focuses on the immediate relationship between film and social context, rather than on the content and structure of each film.

The material is analysed through the theoretical and conceptual lens of human dignity. Human dignity should be distinguished from human rights and can be described as the humanity endowed to each person on earth by God, as an intrinsic value a human being has, simply by being a human being. This humanity may be harmed by others or by circumstances, but can never be destroyed, as the source thereof remains in God. This grounding of human dignity in God will form the theoretical outline and theological base for this study in practical theology.

The use of different literary styles and approaches has been dictated by the material under scrutiny. Research analysing the history of human rights, with human dignity as the basis of human rights, is offered, utilising the wealth of material available in this regard. The concept of human dignity has previously been thoroughly researched by scholars and works that have been consulted include theological works portraying human beings as created in the image of God as rationale, as well as historical overviews of the development of the concepts of human dignity and human rights, both secular and religious.

The role of art as a product of culture, and film as a form of art, is discussed and applied to the material under scrutiny by making use of literary studies in this regard, such as Cilliers 2012.<sup>9</sup> Relevant publications on the role of images and icons in the interpretation of reality have been consulted as literary studies for offering background on the manifestation of the *Other* in film, as well as the portrayal of injustice and redemption in film. This theoretical background is used in order to link the role of religion in film to the concrete portrayal of society in these films. The link can furthermore be found in the rich use of icons and imaging in these films. An *approach of conceptualisation* has been applied for the focus thus far.

The historical period 1960 to 1976 in the South African history is described as background with the focus on the development of the identity of the “Afrikaner” as it was perceived by *inter alia* the power elite of the Nationalist Party (in power), the *Afrikaner Broederbond*

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<sup>8</sup> The definition for this new concept is offered by Cargal 2007:2

<sup>9</sup> The four “movements” identified by Cilliers are used in discussing the interaction between film and audience, Cilliers 2012:139.

(behind the power), the *Suid-Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns*<sup>10</sup> (influence on power) and other Afrikaans cultural and economic groupings which influenced the system at the time. The historical role of the Afrikaans churches and their influence during the period under discussion merits an analytical focus on their declarations, meetings and synod proceedings. The historical sources available include a rich diversity of books by South African and international scholars, unpublished theses and dissertations, journal articles, conference papers and newspaper articles. A *narrative approach* has been used to describe this factual and relevant background.

Sources have been used selectively in order to focus on the relevant themes offered by these films. A general overview of the history of Afrikaners in SA is offered, but with specific focus on the relationship between Afrikaners and the so-called Coloured population at the time. Although the policy of apartheid governed all race relations and although the white/black relationships were of utmost importance in understanding the history of the Republic, it forms only the background in this analysis, as the focus by the director of these films was placed on white/Coloured relationships.

No meaningful theoretical studies could be found on the role and influence of Afrikaans film on society.<sup>11</sup> These three Afrikaans films presented a rich field for examination and research, and offered insights into the dynamics and forces instrumental in the formation of perceptions and preconceptions about various manifestations in society, including the human dignity of people.

The storylines and dialogue of the films are each discussed separately, with the focus on the different *observations* offered, *interpretations* given, *anticipation* created and *transformation* suggested as movements through the material. An analysis of the connection between the content of each film with the meaning of human dignity and with the unmasking of actions within society which violated human dignity at the time are crucially important in order to find an answer to the research question. This part of the analysis is offered in a *reflective* and in an *essayist style*.

The *National Film, Video and Sound Archives* (Archives) in Pretoria has proven to be an invaluable source of research material, offering clippings about almost every printed article

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<sup>10</sup> *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns (Akademie)*, founded in 1909 with the goal of protecting and enhancing the development of research in Afrikaans in science, technology and the arts, as well as the development of Afrikaans literature. The Hertzog Prize is the best known award that is yearly awarded.

<sup>11</sup> The two studies that come closest in an attempt to discuss the influence of Afrikaans film on society are: Botha and Botha 1992 and Botha and Van Aswegen 1992. Both these sources concentrate on the later period outside the scope of this study.

or discussion published about the films at that time.<sup>12</sup> This material is important in clarifying the response of the public to the films, in shedding light on the debates that were opened in the press and elsewhere, as well as on the intercultural dialogue that followed between Afrikaners and the English-speaking population. In using these clippings, the references to newspaper cuttings are offered with the name of the source and date only, as the use of by-lines and names of authors was not a journalistic practice at the time. An addendum is attached, containing the relevant sources used as well as numerous more cuttings. The only sources available where the public's reaction to these films (or social comment on issues of the day) may be traced during this period are in the media of the day, and this comprised of newspaper and magazine cuttings. Social media and television did not exist and the SABC did not offer any such discussion programmes.

In concluding the research, the initial conceptualisation is applied to the material, resulting in a *synthetic approach*. The terminology used during the period under scrutiny is in line with the terms and language used at the time: Coloured(s), non-whites and Indians occur throughout this analysis in the way it was embedded in the everyday language of the 1960s, with "Coloureds" referring to people of mixed race.<sup>13</sup>

### 1.5 Film as Art: A Framework

The films under discussion offered comment on the cultural fibre of the Afrikaans society and portrayed the injustices that manifested in the apartheid dispensation by uncovering the consequences of the policy as injustices that inflicted hurt, damage and violence on the human dignity of persons and groups. In order to form an understanding of the comments offered by these films, the link is drawn between human dignity and culture,<sup>14</sup> film as a product of art within culture, and the role of the artist as prophet, commenting on society.

Art is a product of culture and therefore offers a view into the different elements that form any specific culture. The forms of art may differ and may include products as being visual

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<sup>12</sup> This study does not claim access to a complete record of each and every article that had appeared at the time, but is offered on the assumption that the records used as obtained from the National Archives have been nearly, or might even have been totally complete.

<sup>13</sup> The term "Coloureds" was in common use in SA during the apartheid period, but has always been an emotionally charged concept. The way it is used in this assignment is in line with the general use during the 1960s amongst both whites and the so-called Coloureds.

<sup>14</sup> The UNESCO definition of culture: "in its widest sense ... the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or a social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs (Dhouib 2015:53), or "Culture amplifies life; it articulates life by means of speech (language), thinking (conceptualisation), gesture (symbolic indicators), customs (habit and utilisation) and creative activities (craft and technique). By means of culture, the cosmos is recreated into a human space for living" (Louw 2014:62).

art, music, drama, performances with or without sound, printed and more, with film as one art form through which a culture expresses itself.

An operative description of “art” is offered as: “Art is but one expression of the umbrella term ‘aesthetics’. A preliminary definition of art could well be: the process and the result of a particular effort of one or more people to give meaning to (aspects of) their experiences in the context of their culture.” Art is, like theology, fundamentally concerned with humanity’s search for meaning. Art can also be described as the observation of reality with all our senses, interpreting it through play and lament, and transforming it with anticipatory images of healing alternatives (Cilliers 2012:14-15, 53), or alternatively art can be seen as “a transformative act of spiritual transformation” (Louw 2014:118), with the “ability to express the movement of human soul and the articulation of living forces in such a way that it stirs creative imagination and inspires to interpret, transform and transcend reality” (Louw 2001:1).

The impact of art on society may be significant and is captured as a formative function: *Aesthetics/Art challenges our definitions of theology*. For example, it urges us to be more metaphorical and narrative-orientated, more playful and more daring to dance in search for truth. This sort of theology that exists in dialogue with art will undoubtedly be a theology of risk, heuristic and possibly speculative by nature. It does, after all, experiment with models, metaphors and images (McFague 1987: xii).

Furthermore, and specifically applicable to film, it can be stated that such a theology “will be a relative theology, exciting, inclusive, a bit tentative, but open to transformation, to possibilities to celebrate the past tradition, as well as the present, but also to anticipate a better future. And this is the role of imagination: to transcend apparent inconsistencies bringing together opposites and placing them in creative juxtaposition. Theology, and art, that function like this, blossom in the interplay of continuously changing perspectives” (Cilliers 2012:173).

Paul Tillich identifies four levels of art, namely art with a non-religious style and a non-religious content; art with a religious style and a non-religious content; art with a non-religious style and a religious content and art with a religious style and a religious content (Cilliers 2012:50).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The films under scrutiny in this analysis may be categorised as non-religious but with a religious content.

In this discussion, four different movements through which art takes the participant or viewer, as developed by Cilliers, will apply, namely *observation*, *interpretation*, *anticipation* and *transformation*.<sup>16</sup> These movements can clearly be identified in the films under scrutiny.

### 1.5.1 Observation

We may observe reality from within ourselves, from who we are (faith observations), but also purely in a sensory way; faith observations lead to reality being viewed as truly before God (*coram Deo*).<sup>17</sup> In art, the fears and hope of people are expressed, including anxieties, darkness and light, joy and grief and also their donning of masks, their idols and their icons where all spheres of human life are portrayed, as well as their beliefs. Light and darkness can be portrayed in human suffering and lament, in crying out to God, and human dignity may be found within lament and suffering, although God did not intend for his people to suffer. The various trials of human life can also be portrayed by the use of symbolism and imagery by the artist (Cilliers 2012:144, 147, 158).<sup>18</sup>

In the observation of distress and lament in art and in film, human beings can be seen speaking to Godself as being intimately involved in their lives, about the “rawness and messiness” of life (Cilliers 2012:156) and hence can be portrayed by the use of symbolism and imagery. Art, as may also be experienced in film, sometimes may disorientate<sup>19</sup> the viewer, as it opens different perspectives and views of reality.

Not only lament, but also the feasting in film can portray real life. The joy, as experienced against the messiness and the grief in life, can be offered as contrast to lament, pointing to life consisting of different levels and experiences.

Metaphors may also be used in observing reality to create meaning in a new way. “... a word used in an unfamiliar context to give us new insight; a good metaphor moves us to see our ordinary world in an extraordinary way” (McFague 1978:4).

<sup>16</sup> The four “movements” are offered by Cilliers and is functional in the analysis of the films under discussion (Cilliers 2012:139-224).

<sup>17</sup> Such observation can be defined as follows: “To have, through our senses, which are directly related to our total humanity, a basic openness to all impulses from reality, and therefore oppose preconceived and hasty conclusions, and to be receptive to the apparent paradoxes of this life – in order to make sense from them from a faith perspective” (Cilliers 2012:145).

<sup>18</sup> According to Ackermann, “Lament is more than railing against suffering, breast beating or a confession of guilt. It is a coil of suffering and hope, awareness and memory, anger and relief, desires for vengeance, forgiveness and healing. It is our way of bearing the unbearable, both individually and communally. It is a wailing of the human soul, a barrage of tears, reproaches, petitions, praise and hopes which beat against the heart of God. It is, in essence, supremely human” (Ackermann 2001: 26).

<sup>19</sup> Disorientation can be seen as: “The language of lament articulates those feelings and experiences on the edges of our existence, feelings and experiences of liminality that disrupt our equilibrium and shatter our mediocrity, and kindle in us a longing for transcendence” (Cilliers 2012:156).



### 1.5.2 Interpretation

Aesthetics can be described as the science of sensory knowledge and it will open up the ability to see anew; to see what was previously hidden. In this way, new imaginative perspectives are formed which can lead to the discovery of God in the reality of everyday life (Cilliers 2012: 25, 92, 165). Such perspectives may open up new views and experiences on the various forms that life can manifest in culture and in communities. It may introduce the viewer to the vulnerabilities but also the joy of others. The pain and ingloriousness of life in the other communities or persons may lead to new interpretations that may lead to actions of acceptance or restoration.<sup>20</sup>

Interpretation can be seen as an act of unmasking, of revealing different layers of truth beneath the surface of the obvious. Not only one mask, but sometimes multiple masks must be peeled/removed in order to open multiple perspectives. It is a process by which new meaning can be revealed between the subject and the object and it can be described as the “process whereby the mask of artificiality, falsehoods is stripped away in order to reveal reality, or different perspectives of reality” (Louw 2014:49).

To find meaning we need to interpret and comprehend our experiences and our world around us. Icons,<sup>21</sup> images,<sup>22</sup> scenes, scenarios and dialogue in art, are all instrumental in opening the new vistas to us. To be able to view iconically supersedes the rationality of cognitive understanding by way of imagination and symbolism (Louw 2014:12).<sup>23</sup> In art, “(i)images, no matter how discreetly chosen, come freighted with conscious or subliminal memories; no matter how limited their projected use, they burn indelible outlines into the mind” (Mathews 1993:11). Images are also never merely private, but they are social statements, and can take the form of graffiti or mural art. Such public art, including film, may make alarming statements in the public domain, with symbols and signs that transcend observation and need to be interpreted by the viewer in order to open up understanding. They therefore need iconic viewing (Louw 2014:57-58).

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<sup>20</sup> “God’s glory after all lies in God’s ingloriousness, God’s might in God’s impotence, God’s victory in God’s death” (Cilliers 2012:168).

<sup>21</sup> “The concept of icons connects images with imagination and the many-layered levels of aesthetics. ‘Icons’ refers *inter alia* to significance and awareness” (Louw 2014:16). “Icons try to feed and energise the ‘veins’ of a culture and provide indicators for purposeful life orientation” (Louw 2014:57). Icons are closely related to the tradition and liturgy of the Eastern Orthodox churches.

<sup>22</sup> Images can convey to the viewer what is “too terrible for words”, as in modern newspaper pictures and reports of the devastation caused by the bombing, terror attacks or natural disasters.

<sup>23</sup> “(T)ranscendent seeing can be called the iconic fourth dimension of viewing, i.e. the spiritual act of seeing the unseen” (Louw 2014:13).



Film is a powerful medium in conveying meaning by using different imaging, icons and symbols and it can open up perspectives which can be described as “the web of connections, understanding, and interpretation that helps us comprehend our experience and formulates plans directing our energies to the achievement of our desired future. Meaning provides us with the sense that our lives matter, that they make sense, and that they are more than the sum of our seconds, days and years” (Steger 2012:165).

### 1.5.3 Anticipation

Various perspectives opened up by art and different imaginative interpretations of reality may lead to anticipation of a better and transformed reality. A fuller life in future may therefore become an imaginative anticipation.<sup>24</sup> Portrayal in film of the ugly and the beautiful in contrast serves to bring this anticipation home to the viewer. Even the search for analogies of longed-for beauty in the reality of the portrayal of the mundane, daily lives of people may bring this longed-for beauty home. This “could be called, theoretically speaking, a type of eschatology-in-aesthetics” (Cilliers 2012:182-184). Imagination can be used to enrich the daily or the future reality. Images, words and icons may powerfully enrich the world of the viewer in a metaphorical way, creating anticipation of a better world to come.<sup>25</sup>

The imaginative use of liminality,<sup>26</sup> where a measure of uncertainty meets hopeful interpretation, may create anticipation successfully, and in film this may create a phase in the “in-between” of time; a phase between two situations or statuses (Cilliers 2012:195-198). It is a “sense of displacement, that sense of being in no-man’s land, where the landscape appears completely different, there is no discernible road map, and where the journeyer is jolted out of normalcy” (Franks and Meteyard 2007:216). Paul Tournier refers to liminality as being *en route*, having left your home and not yet having arrived at your destination (Tournier 1968:163). It can also be described as the experience of being in limbo (Peterson 2000:20).

The use of silence may also be used very effectively in creating anticipation. In film, this use of silence is of specific importance, as it contrasts with the usual dialogue. “Only in silence, in the space between noise, speech and activity, is there room for a person to become focussed, to achieve gravity and centredness ... Only in silence, brooding upon the fact that

<sup>24</sup> “Art and beauty anticipate a reality which hasn’t arrived yet in such a way that it, as it were, includes this reality” (Cilliers 2012:182).

<sup>25</sup> “It inspires in us a sense that there is a greater reality that does not simply stem or flow from this world, although it is intended for this world. The Bible calls this hope” (Cilliers 2012:182).

<sup>26</sup> The term “liminality” was coined in 1909 by Arnold van Gennep to indicate thresholds, margins, outlines in order to describe human rituals marking the passage from one life cycle to another (Cilliers 2012:195).

there is a world, that there is eternity, does one become endowed with the true worldliness and true everlastingness” (Killinger 2005:129).

#### 1.5.4 Transformation

The aesthetic process should also move the viewer into the fourth “movement” of transformation, bringing about change and transformation. If this does not happen the work of art, for instance, a painting, book or film, will not achieve its goal and will remain in the realm of the esoteric. The art of transformation can be described as based on three theological-anthropological presuppositions: Firstly, that people receive a new identity before God and in Christ as they are created and recreated in the image of God (*imago Dei*); that this secondly leads to a new continuous growth towards their new identity, and thirdly that transformed and transforming people accept co-responsibility for the transformation of the reality in which they live (Cilliers 2012:206-207).

Images and symbolism, as forms of art, appeal to people on levels where words cannot reach (Cilliers 2012:208). Experiences in such situations may open up new possibilities of ways out of the current reality and restrictions and limitations, and new ways of confronting reality and challenges may be opened up. Such new visions may open up a language of hope and by doing so transcend the current context, thus also transforming it into something new and hopeful, while such transformation may also lead to new actions.

Public protest by art and artists is well known.<sup>27</sup> Art, in any of the forms that it may be offered, can loudly expose injustice in situations in the culture from where it emanates and such protest by art and artists may carry a message that is sometimes too difficult to be put into words.

#### 1.5.5 Film as Product of Culture

The twentieth century has developed into a century of images, especially in the later part of the millennium. Images became part of the intimate living spaces of households when television became popular and accessible, while the film industry benefited not only from technological improvements and developments, but also from the growing economic ability to enjoy leisure activities in the post-World War Two world. As moving media replaced the written word in a growing electronic world, film began taking on a growing significance to convey meaning and to shape culture through already existing meaning and values (Horsfield et al. 2004:21).

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<sup>27</sup> An example is the painting by Picasso, *Guernica*: This painting is a loud protest against the inhumanity of violence and war (Cilliers 2012:214).

As a cultural product, film has the possibility to contribute to the spirituality and meaningfulness of the life of the viewer. Spiritual images can be created and film can play a powerful role in unmasking the hidden and also artificial meanings and actions in a society.<sup>28</sup> When film is used to unmask, it may become iconic. “It can then act like a dagger that reveals the shadow side of our being human and cut away the layers of pretention. This kind of destruction can disrupt and even annoy the viewer” (Louw 2014: 49).

Popular and art categories of film may be distinguished, as well as a difference between factual and fictional genres. A genre refers to different categories, such as topics or themes and examples of genres include horror, dramatic science fiction, westerns, comedy, musical, animation, historical and more. The factual and fictional in films may also be blended, resulting in a fusion between artificial and existential realities. Films may also have the function to stimulate imagination, open up new vistas and add value to perspectives on the meaning of life. Such films may be seen as “intrinsically an aesthetic medium” and meaning can be created by making use of unlimited images, narratives, symbols and icons. In the aesthetic film, the audience will be pointed towards spirituality and transcendent imagery (Louw 2014:116-117), as for instance in a film such as *As it is in Heaven*.

As different images in film oscillate between what is real and what is virtual or behind reality, the different images try to relate fact and fiction and films then may be viewed as “simulated iconography” (Louw 2014:115-116).<sup>29</sup> Film may not only open new perspectives, but can also lead to changed attitudes and actions in people and society. It may therefore be described as transformative.

Religious culture is always found within another culture, and the portrayal of God or the *Other* in art or film is enhanced by the development of electronic media and film. This may result in the added capacity to bring meaning swiftly across cultures, offering the possibility of influencing transformation. The *Other* may be experienced in film in a transcendental way in two different types of experiences. Firstly, it may be an encounter with the self, and specifically with the sacred self, with that which lies beyond the natural but gives meaning to it. Such an experience is always a mystery and can be inviting and awe-inspiring at the

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<sup>28</sup> “The film industry has made an indelible impression on our culture. Films have a remarkable ability to entertain, to animate emotions, widen horizons and open up surprising perspectives. It also has the ability however, to lead us into the mysteries of life, and therefore also of religion” (Cilliers 2012: 85).

<sup>29</sup> Virtual reality as created by film “operates within the realm of spirituality and opens the eye of the viewer to the transcendent realm of aesthetics and significance. The *hyper-reality* of the film operates like a *transparency*: images help the viewer to ‘peep’ into another world and to simulate icons” (Louw 2014:118-119).

same time, evoking dread or fascination. Transcendence in this sense refers to something independent of ourselves.

Secondly, such a transcendent experience may also be within the self, in terms of human possibility of exceeding our limitations, of experiencing on the one hand wholeness within brokenness, of glimpsing how life was supposed to be. This leads to experiencing the “the still point of the turning world” (Johnston 2000:155). This may be the human experience of wholeness, as in putting Humpty Dumpty together again in one completely healed life. It may also on the other hand result in a confrontation with the self, realising one’s own brokenness within the brokenness of a broken reality.

The dialogue in film is always a two-way dialogue, offering a context and narrative to the audience that receives this from within a personal and individual cultural context. The communication is always two-directional while the narrative and images offered, those in the frame that tell the story, can be seen as cultural agents. Such narratives present a more nuanced and comprehensive rendition of reality than does a single picture (Warren 1997:143-144).

It is possible to differentiate between two different kinds of viewers (Warren 1997:144). On the one hand, there is the majority of people who have no coherent criteria by which they judge a film, while the narrative and images merely wash over them. On the other side are people who examine the social, political and economic conditions shaping the narratives, and all production considerations should be subordinate to the evaluation of the script or the development of the narrative in terms of basic human meaning (Warren 1997:145). The possession of wisdom by the film producer, or the writer, is therefore the most fundamental attribute.

A story that is worth telling does what all art does; it synthesizes and unifies human experience, cleanses perception and illuminates what is hidden. It should take the viewer or audience through the movements of observation, interpretation, anticipation and transformation. Film is such a form of art; it can be used to create illumination and coherence within the viewer.

In being art within a specific culture, film can reveal something about the social forces operative in the culture that produced it. Film may thus move beyond portraying the obvious into the process of unmasking and revealing the forces and actions beneath the surface.

These four movements of art are applied in assessing the influence of these films, or the lack thereof, on the society from which they emanated.

## 1.6 Outcomes

The three films, *Die Kandidaat*, *Katrina* and *Jannie Totsiens*, were not initially planned or produced as a trilogy. They each focused on a specific area of society, but in doing this spontaneously developed into a natural three-sided view of society. They are analysed in this study in the chronological order they were produced. These films unmasked the injustices in the political, economic, religious and cultural dimensions of South Africa during the period 1960 to 1976, and a picture emerged of the gross violations against the human dignity of persons in all dimensions of human interaction.

The fragmentation of Afrikaner identity was portrayed in these films while the causes thereof, grounded in human nature, were also clinically exposed. Furthermore, these films portrayed a sense of the *Other* in film well before theological analysis of film became a field of study.

The outcomes of this study are given against the violations on the three levels of the *self*, the *other* and the *Other*.

The messages these films bring to the audiences are timeless. The unmasking of the violations that occurred in this specific society can be relevant to any current society where any form of injustice is present, or where the interests of the group as a whole takes precedence over the humanity of individuals.<sup>30</sup> These films illustrate the power of visual media in commenting and unmasking such actions.

Although the films were screened in the mainstream theatres (segregated by race), the audiences consisted mostly of Afrikaners who felt at home in their own language. Attendance figures differed widely; *Jannie Totsiens* was regarded as a box office failure, while *Die Kandidaat* and *Katrina* were successful in pulling large and enthusiastic audiences. The interaction between audience and film, between “real” and “reel”, offers insight into the research question, namely the question of why a meaningful dissonance became markedly clear between the “message” of the films and the understanding thereof by the audiences.

The reasons why the messages of these films about the violations against the human dignity of people were not understood and taken seriously enough to be acted upon by viewers and decision-makers should be answered by this study. The answers are complex and are impacted by a range of factors that existed within this very complex society, including the nature of the powerful regime which resisted any change, the nature of the Afrikaner identity,

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<sup>30</sup> This theory was presented by Niebuhr Reinhold in his book *Moral Man and Immoral Society* 1960 (first published in 1932). The analysis and theory as developed by Niebuhr is of importance in understanding dissonance that was found between intent and perception and will be applied in Chapter 7.

the role of threat perception in the Afrikaans community and government, the role of Christianity and the perceptions held by Afrikaners based on their beliefs, as well as the nature of individual and group morality. The outcomes offered as a conclusion in the last chapter serve as a potential understanding to the research question.

It was found that the focus of the filmmaker(s) on the injustice that manifested in society unmasked at a deeper level the violations of the human dignity of people as this forms the grounding of human rights and therefore the grounding of justice and injustice. It was found that the underlying lens applied in order to provide social comment, may be described as the lens of human dignity of persons and groups. The films were received by the public through a different set of filters that were identified by this analysis and that prohibited the understanding of the meaning embodied in the narratives.

This study is placed in the field of practical theology as it analyses these complex relationships with the focus and underlying assumption of persons as the *imago Dei*, the image of God, acting within the creation of God.

## 1.7 Structure

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Human Rights and Human Dignity

Analysis of the history of human rights that underlies human dignity is followed by the development of a perspective on human dignity that forms the theoretical background for this study. The process and development of international human rights as institutionalised through different legal and cultural agreements and laws, the dimensions of human dignity, and aspects of human dignity until the current acceptance thereof are scrutinised. This process includes the development of human rights from both secular and theistic roots.

The underlying value of the human being as a creation by God, but also as being created in the image of God, *imago Dei*, forms the assumption of this study. Different perspectives on human dignity are highlighted. Three levels of violations are singled out, namely violations against human rights of the *self*, where a person acts against his/her own humanity, violations against the *other*, when the action by one person violates the human dignity of the other person, and violations against the *Other*, when a person or persons act against the human dignity and humanity of God. Violations against any of these may lead to a process whereby indignity is brought onto the *self*, the *other* or the *Other*.

Chapter 3: Human Dignity within the Context of History and Afrikaner Identity

An analysis of the historical roots of the Afrikaner identity and the powers that shaped this identity, as well as the situation from 1960 to 1976 on *economic, religious, cultural* and *political* levels will be given as background, with the role of religion meriting specific attention.

The institutionalisation of apartheid during these years is described as well as the direct impact of apartheid on every aspect of humanity and dignity. During these years, measures by the government were put into place in order to restrain certain developments within the cultural life of the Afrikaner.<sup>31</sup>

The background and manifestation of the Afrikaner identity and group identity will be portrayed as the canvas against which the films are viewed.

#### Chapter 4: *Die Kandidaat (The Candidate)* (1968)<sup>32</sup>

*Storyline:* An Afrikaner “super” identity, the Adrian Delpont Stigting, needs to appoint a new managing director who will also be a member of this foundation. All segments of Afrikanerdom come under scrutiny in this political drama (the role of religion, money, the civil service, women, the mining sector, labour, the man in the street, the *Akademie*<sup>33</sup> and more. During the relentless interviews in the boardroom, the unmasking of all of these becomes the focus. The political and the social impact of the Immorality Act<sup>34</sup> and the Mixed Marriages Act<sup>35</sup> forms one of the focus points.

This drama takes the viewer into the identity of the Afrikaner of the 1960s. It reveals the underlying opposing currents at that time, but also the forces that kept the Afrikaner together as a homogenous group.

The test to pass for this new candidate becomes a test of his true identity as Afrikaner (“ware Afrikaner”) and all that this upholds and entails. During this process, one drama unfolds upon another that involves conflict within the group, unmasking of identity perceptions, deceit and hate. The *Other* is hardly to be found inside the boardroom, save for the lone voice of the “dominee” who offers a voice of redemption. In the outside world, the *Other* takes form in the lives of normal everyday people.

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<sup>31</sup> *The Publications Control Board* was authorised in 1963 by the government in order to ban films and books (in practice all cultural products) that were perceived by government to threaten the morals or security of the South African society and state.

<sup>32</sup> *Die Kandidaat* (1968), Producer Emil Nofal, Director Jans Rautenbach, starring Roelf Jacobs, Cobus Rossouw, Gert van den Berg, Marie du Toit, Hermien Domisse, Don Leonard, Regardt van den Bergh.

<sup>33</sup> *Die Suid Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns*.

<sup>34</sup> The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, 1949, amended 1968.

<sup>35</sup> The Immorality Amendment Act, 1950, amended in 1969.



Choices that are made at the end reflect further upon the inherent *political, social, economic* and *religious* problems that were built into this situation. Real life situations are brought into the picture and exposed in the process of unmasking.

#### Chapter 5: *Katrina* (1969)<sup>36</sup>

*Storyline:* This is a “try-for-white” story as reflected in this intensely emotional social drama. Once again the violations against people of colour, not only by the state, but especially by the Afrikaner, are brutally unmasked. It is a sad story of the split-identity between so-called Coloured people and Afrikaners, of love across the “colour-line” that tears a community and a people apart. The powerful destruction by institutionalised violence is portrayed by the results thereof; the sadness of people to cope with a policy they do not understand and for which they find no reason. Redemption comes once again in the form of normal everyday people, but not for all.

The events in the film are related to real situations that took place in society, but were accepted as the norm by most people, with little protest emanating from within the Afrikaner community. Relating these fictional events to real life events as they happened at the time, but about which society was silent, is shown as the powerful role of the film in unmasking injustice and violations against human rights and dignity.

#### Chapter 6: *Jannie Totsiens (Johnny Farewell)* (1970)<sup>37</sup>

The film is an allegory, portraying the society of which it was a product.

*Storyline:* Jannie represents the voice of reason when he is admitted to a rural asylum for the mentally unfit. Jannie is in a catatonic state, but perfectly sane, surrounded by “insane” people who, metaphorically, represent all sectors of society. He is unable, without voice, to stop the process of moving-into-madness around him. Although he does regain the use of speech later on in the film, he remains powerless and he is then the one found guilty by all and sentenced to death by hanging upside down.

The other voices of reason in the film are those of an Indian man as one of the staff members (disabled because of his colour) and a young boy who is physically disabled, as he has no arms. These few voices of reason remain impotent against the violence and

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<sup>36</sup> *Katrina* (1969), Producer Emil Nofal, Director Jans Rautenbach, starring Joe Stewardson, Jill Kirkland, Cobus Rossouw, Katinka Heyns, Carel Trichardt, Ian Strauss, Don Leonard, Regardt van den Bergh.

<sup>37</sup> *Jannie Totsiens (Jannie Farewell)* (1970), Produced and directed by Jans Rautenbach, starring Katinka Heyns, Cobus Rossouw, Jill Kirkland, Don Leonard, Patrick Mynhardt.



indignities suffered. A fantasy world of dreams as an escape from this world of madness is brilliantly portrayed by Linda, one of the inmates.

In *Jannie Totsiens*, the different manifestations of various violations against human dignity within society, the historical roots thereof, the social manifestation thereof, the powerlessness and the inability to change this sliding escalation into “madness” are clearly illustrated. The relentless movement of society towards the 1976 catharsis is portrayed by this film well before it exploded onto the South African reality. From examples of real life events during the time it becomes clear that the film fulfilled a prophetic role, speaking out against injustice happening at the time, violating human dignity in many ways and in many spheres.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

These films evoked comment and critique from audiences about different themes, including the essence and fibre of a homogenous Afrikaner identity, the view of a missionary calling to power in order to preserve Christian civilization and the complex problems contained therein. The structural violations against the dignity and humanity of people by the state and the cultural violence experienced by persons and groups became brutally exposed as injustices within the communities portrayed and will be linked to situations that occurred in society at the time and were reported in the media of the day.

The violations against human dignity by the society manifested on three levels, and these will be used as the background against which the outcomes of the study will be assessed. Firstly, violations can be seen as they were done and enacted by persons against themselves, against the *self*, against their own human dignity, the humanity endowed to them as individual human beings created in God’s image by God. Secondly, persons violated the humanity of other persons, against the *other*, and lastly the human dignity of God was shown to be violated specifically against the *Other* in certain scenes reflecting reality, but also in every instance where any human being’s dignity was violated. The dignity, also the human dignity of the *imago Dei* suffers whenever a human being, as the affirmed humanity of God, suffers.

This study illuminates how the films exposed these violations by the acts of *observing*, *interpreting* and *anticipating*. How the audiences reacted to selected issues and themes and ignored others will form the background to this study when exploring the research question, namely the dissonance between the unmasking of reality as perceived by the director and the way in which audiences received and reacted to this unmasking of the circumstances surrounding their daily lives. Proof of any meaningful manifestation of the fourth possible

influence that these films could have on society, namely the *transformation* thereof, was difficult to find in the media.

A central aspect of this study is the role that the perception of human dignity by the Afrikaner of *self*, *others* and the *Other* played in these films, and therefore the perception of humanity within the Afrikaner society and within the government, was closely linked to the theological ground that influenced the beliefs held by most Afrikaners. Afrikaners' perception at the time of human rights and human dignity places the question in a practical theological field, when viewed through the lens of human dignity, as the concept is developed in the following chapter. In the concluding chapter of the study, some views are offered on the contributing factors for the discrepancy and dissonance between film and audience.

## Chapter 2: Human Rights and Human Dignity

### 2.1 Introduction

Within communal living, certain norms and values are formed, arranging relational living in order to prosper. Over time, rights<sup>38</sup> were developed and claimed by persons and groups, in order to arrange and organise society, but the human race has not yet succeeded in arranging a way of life in which people can live together in a dignified manner, with rights and justice to the benefit of all.

In modern history, the twentieth century manifested some of the most horrifying acts against human beings by fellow human beings ever recorded. Efforts to curb atrocities against humanity by human beings were already under way, but became, especially after the end of the Second World War, a call for the international institutionalisation of human rights. The grounding of such human rights in human dignity forms the theoretical basis for the analysis offered of the three Afrikaans films, as cultural products of the society, on the society from which they emanated. The concept “dignity” is to be distinguished from the complex concept “human dignity”, as dignity may refer to a characteristic or a social category that is usually linked to a person on account of the role or position he or she fills. It mostly refers to a respect for that person on account of status,<sup>39</sup> while for the purpose of this study, the concept of human dignity will be developed as an endowed content that belongs to every human being and can be viewed as the ontological root of the humanity of each person.<sup>40</sup>

The worldwide process that led to the acknowledgement of human dignity in the phenomenon of human rights was complicated and had different dimensions. Not only were the secular movements after the Enlightenment real and influential, but the underlying religious roots also became apparent as new legislation was formulated and enacted. The

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<sup>38</sup> One definition offered: “A right is a legitimate claim to some good in the life or subsequent history of the life bearer” (Wolterstorff 2008:362).

<sup>39</sup> This may be called “ascribed dignity”. It can be seen as a social category as it thus relates to the rank and status of a particular person in society (Huber 1996:115). In a situation where a person presumes dignity on account of his or her own judgement about own importance, status or position, it can be called “claimed dignity” or “demanded dignity”.

<sup>40</sup> Such human dignity cannot be “robbed” or denied, but it can be violated, diminished and belittled by labelling, stereotyping, cognitive separation, destructive emotional reactions, status loss, stigmatisation and discrimination (Louw 2013:10). From such a perspective, human dignity is not an attribute or characteristic, but the essence of a human being. “I cannot ‘claim’ dignity, I *am* dignity” (Louw 2013:6).

discourse about the historical development of the institutionalisation of human rights therefore centres on the two different perspectives of the origin of the concept human rights, as became clear during the process of the development thereof, namely the secular as well as the theistic grounding.

## 2.2 The Institutionalisation of Human Rights

Historically, the role of the Magna Carta (Great Charter) issued by King John of England (1199-1216) can be seen as a cornerstone document that heralded the acknowledgement of the rights of peoples within Western civilizations. It was a document of great symbolic value that has been changed many times over the course of time. The most important and most famous clause is: “No free man [sic] shall be seized or imprisoned or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled or deprived of his standing in any other way, nor will we proceed with force against him [sic], or send others to do so, except by the law of the land. To no one will we sell, to no one will deny or delay right or justice”<sup>41</sup> The term “free man” comprised only a small portion of the population of England at the time, as the majority of people were unfree peasants.

During the Middle Ages, the development of the acknowledgement of the rights of people was strongly connected to the processes of democratisation that swept over Europe. These in turn were strongly influenced by the Calvinistic reformation of the sixteenth century (De Witte Jnr 2007: 1).<sup>42</sup>

The lasting influence of Calvin and his followers were, however, clear in the development of a theological basis for human rights as these teachings became entrenched in the enduring institutional and constitutional reforms in Europe and America. The most essential of these rights were religious rights, but they were followed by claims for the attendant rights to assemble, speak, worship, evangelise, educate, parent, travel and more. The religious rights thus formed the “mother” of many other human rights (Jellinek 1895:2). The Reformation resulted in a number of landmark constitutional documents that followed and whereby the concept of human rights was confirmed.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Magna Carta an Introduction, <http://www.bl.uk/magna-carta/articles/magna-carta-an-introduction>. Accessed 16/10/2016.

<sup>42</sup> The early modern Calvinist tracts and sermons do, however, also contain the defence of shameful forms of injustice, such as slavery, chauvinism, racism, bigotry, elitism and more (De Witte Jnr 2007:1).

<sup>43</sup> These documents included *inter alia* The Ecclesiastical Ordinance (1541/61) and the Civil Edict (1568) of Geneva, in the Netherlands the Union of Utrecht (1579) and the Act of Abjuration (1581), in France the Edict of Nantes (1598), in Scotland the Solemn League and Covenant (1643), in England the Petition of Right (1628), The Bill of Rights (1689) and the Toleration Act (1689), in New England sundry documents from the Body of Liberties (1641) to the Massachusetts Constitution (1780).

The English poet and political philosopher, John Milton (1608-1674), extended the Calvinist view of human rights by arguing that each person is created in the image of God. He argued that each person was invested with natural rights.<sup>44</sup> He was followed in this view by a number of England Puritans (De Witte Jnr 2007:15).

In historical order, the first important documentation in the Modern World is to be found in the *Virginia Bill of Rights*, 1779. This bill was the direct result of the American War of Independence (1775-1783) and the essence of this declaration was contained in the wording that “all men [sic] are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” (Gräb and Charbonnier 2015:11). Although this declaration was issued, the basic tenet of equality still clashed with the manifestation of considerable discrimination for a long time to come.<sup>45</sup> It became clear that the practical implications of this document and legislation were not an automatic result of the institutionalisation thereof. This declaration, although not perfect, formed the basis for the next declaration by France that followed.

*The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* followed in 1789, as a direct result of the French Revolution. This declaration could also not prevent that, even after its proclamation, racism and sexism continued to proliferate, and this even became epoch-defining challenges in the future of Europe (Gräb and Charbonnier 2015:12)

Although the triumph over serfdom, the breaking down of discrimination on grounds of group affiliation and the equality of men and women were great turning points towards a universal understanding of a person's dignity, human rights and dignity still could not be regarded as an assured possession. The American and French declarations claimed a universal approach with a confessional base: God made all human beings, apart from what differentiates them as beings standing under God, the Supreme Being and their Creator; human beings should have equal rights (Gräb 2015:46).

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Supporting these and other legal texts on point were thousands of Calvinists pamphlets, sermons, declarations, briefs and learned tracts that defined and defended an ever greater role of rights in church, state and society (De Witte Jnr 2007:3).

<sup>44</sup> “Natural rights are those rights that are not socially conferred, plus those that are socially conferred” “These rights ‘inhere’ in God and in us, on account of the worth that God has by virtue of some status that God has, and in us by virtue of some status that we have. Rather than something or other conferring the right on entities that have this status, the worth of the status grounds that right” (Wolterstorff 2008:317); and according to Milton, every person has the right to speak, worship, and rule in church and state, family and society (De Witte Jnr 2007:13).

<sup>45</sup> As example, slavery still continued. Even Jefferson made use of the service of slaves in his personal life (Gräb and Charbonnier 2015:12).

The *Declaration of Human Rights* by the United Nations, 1948, (*UN Declaration*), followed directly in the wake of the Second World War. The atrocities of the Nazi regime, resulting in the violation of the lives and dignity of people, shocked the world and led to a universal acceptance of this newly formulated *UN Declaration* by the United Nations.<sup>46</sup> This *UN Declaration* refers in its Preamble to the “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family” as “the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world” (Gräb and Charbonnier 2015:9). The *UN Declaration* was signed by the member states at the time, including a wide variety of people from states with different beliefs and belief systems. The *UN Declaration* was not based on a concept of God or a god.<sup>47</sup> This declaration therefore contains no explicit reference to God; not even to Christianity. There is no mention of any explicit theological basis of human rights; it is a claim to the inherent dignity that belongs to every person (Gräb 2015:45). The use of the concept “human dignity” in this declaration can be seen as the functional equivalent of the reference to God in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen 1789*. “Human dignity as the basis for human rights was publically stated in this document for the first time” (Gräb and Charbonnier 2015:45).

The Commission which drafted the *UN Declaration* consisted of delegates from eighteen different nations, including Lebanese, Chinese, Christians, Confucian scholars and delegates from some Arab states.<sup>48</sup> It was therefore not a product of one belief system, or as has sometimes been claimed, of Western thought. The document can rather be described as the result of a successful process of “value generalization” (Joas 2015:35-37).<sup>49</sup> The history of the last twenty years has given the world examples of atrocities and violations against human rights and human dignity in various regions and on various continents, notwithstanding the universal acceptance of the *Declaration of Human Rights* by the United Nations.

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<sup>46</sup> “(T)he contemplation of human rights is often at home in cases where the violation of these rights compels such reflection. Strong convictions of the inviolability of human dignity then ensue when this dignity is gravely violated and damaged” (Huber 2015:1).

<sup>47</sup> The Union of South Africa was one of eight countries that abstained from voting and did not sign the *UN Declaration* at the time.

<sup>48</sup> The two most important “authors” were Charles Malik, a Christian Arab, a Greek Orthodox philosopher from Lebanon, former student in the United States and Germany, and Peng-chun Chang, Chinese philosopher, playwright and diplomat from a Confucian background, with a doctorate from Columbia University, New York City (Gräb and Charbonnier 2015:35).

<sup>49</sup> Future history has proved that every generation afresh has to contend for the equal dignity of every person, unless the values underlying such recognition became accepted universally by all (Huber 2015:12).

## 2.3 The Secular Grounding of Human Rights and Human Dignity

The debates from the secular perspective on human dignity centre around the influences from various civilizations and thought patterns.<sup>50</sup> From Europe, the influence of secular thinking during the Enlightenment originated with humanism, with human dignity anchored in the “self”, in one’s rational talents (Louw 2015a:90), and thereafter led to the modern legal documentation of human rights. According to this perspective, the origin of human rights may therefore be stated as secular. The Enlightenment’s influence was firstly felt in Europe, but soon spread to the rest of the Western world, as the legal and moral philosophy of Emmanuel Kant had a significant influence and delivered a more or less irrefutable foundation for the idea of human rights and the universal dignity of persons (Kant 1795:40-46 as in Gräb and Charbonnier 2015:8).

This secular view of human rights and dignity, offered by the Enlightenment, was questioned, and the challenging question was offered by Nietzsche: whether without God, something about a human being can be identified that provides dignity as in the question: “Is it possible, without reference to God, to identify something about each and every human being that gives him or her a dignity adequate for grounding human rights?” (Wolterstorff 2008:324). If the answer to this question is that human beings possess inalienable dignity and rights and are owed unconditional respect because they are an end in themselves, and therefore *sacred*, the question remains an ontological one: *what are the source and grounding of this sacredness?* Sacredness is derived from God in the “anthropomorphic character of the claim that humans are the beloved children of God” (Gaita as quoted by Wolterstorff 2008:324)<sup>51</sup> “After the Enlightenment and processes of secularization, the notion of human autonomy, put (sic) an ‘anthropocentric’ worldview in the centre of the human dignity discourse” (Louw 2013:3). In this discourse, human dignity is anchored in the “self” and therefore in a person’s “rational talents” (Huber 1996:117).<sup>52</sup>

The view from the Enlightenment, namely that *reason* is the capacity providing the humanity of a person, considers human dignity as grounded in the capacity to reason. The question follows whether persons who do not have reason (being in a comatose state, Alzheimer

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<sup>50</sup> On one hand, the Western civilization and the occidental culture (Huber 2015:8) were seen as claiming universal acceptance for their views. This argument was countered by the inclusion of various authors from across the world in drafting the document that became the *Declaration of Human Rights* by the United Nations in 1948 (Koopman 2015:132-136).

<sup>51</sup> “Humanism is humanity turned inwards, away from God, towards the glorification of our human and rational autonomy. It separates our being human from the ultimate and divine transcendence” (Wolterstorff 2008:333).

<sup>52</sup> “On the other hand, human dignity viewed from a Christian perspective is humanity directed towards justice and the ultimate, transformed by divine grace (spirituality), enveloped by unconditional love, and safeguarded by the ethics of co-existence (justice and human rights)” (Louw 2012:164).



patients, babies and more) then also do not have human rights and dignity? It is also clear that degrees of human rationality differ, and such a perspective will imply that human dignity can be measured in degrees. This view is flawed, as it leads not to the grounding of human dignity of all persons, but to the grounding of human rights and dignity of those who possess rationality only.

## 2.4 Theistic Grounding of Human Rights and Human Dignity

From a *religious perspective*, the grounding of human dignity in human rights was a natural process, although the clarity to view this as such only developed over time. The historical development of views within the Christian churches was influenced by ambivalent views and actions over time. By the middle of the twentieth century, acceptance of human rights by churches as an inherent Christian value became clear (Gräb and Charbonnier 2015:2).<sup>53</sup>

This acceptance by the Christian churches was one of the contributing factors that resulted in objection by people from other faiths that human rights, as defined in Western documentation, do not have a universal validity. This role of the church, as seen in contrast to the secular roots of human dignity in humanity, has been disputed, but it is clear that although the process developed over a long time, it was already stated in 1895 that the idea of “securing the inalienable inborn and sacred rights of the individual in the law is of religious rather than political origin. What has hitherto been viewed as a product of the (French) Revolution is in fact a fruit of the Reformation and its struggles” (Gräb and Charbonnier 2015:27).<sup>54</sup>

The well-known Christian view that human beings are created in God’s image, *imago Dei*, derives from only three mentionings in the Bible, all to be found in Genesis,<sup>55</sup> but throughout

<sup>53</sup> Three factors in early Christianity and through the Middle Ages can be cited as the causes of delay in the process whereby the dignity of all human beings as equal and dignified beings became accepted. *Firstly*, the view that prevailed that the sinfulness of all meant that human beings forfeited their rights before God and with this also their dignity before God and humankind. *Secondly*, Christians held themselves distinct from others (pagans, Jews) and in doing so excluded others from basic human dignity, as this was widely regarded as the privilege of Christian men and women. This view through the ages has also added to the legitimisation of the barbaric practices of persecution of heretics and the pogroms against the Jews (Gräb and Charbonnier 2015:11). *Thirdly*, the hierarchical view of the church from within the church resulted in preference for a differentiating role of the dignity concept above the equalising view of dignity for all. Some were seen as more worthy than others, having also more rights than others within the church (Gräb and Charbonnier 2015:11).

<sup>54</sup> In this regard, an illustration about the initial ambivalent view of the church is to be found in the reaction of the church to the French Revolution. This revolution was not anti-religious as it is mostly painted, but can be described as the first state-sponsored assault on a certain role of Christianity in Europe since the Early Roman Empire. This assault was rather directed against the church’s role in politics and economics, not against the religious role of the church (Gräb and Charbonnier 2015:27-28). This was not clearly understood and the Pope in his reaction condemned the revolution, declaring its principles, including the demand for human rights, as sacrilegious, heretical and schismatic (Gräb and Charbonnier 2015:28).

<sup>55</sup> *The Bible: The Revised Standard Version*. Genesis 1:26 and 27, 5: 1-3, 9: 6.



the rest of Scripture, the humanity and worth of persons are also presented as derived from God's likeness (Van Ruler 1989:44).<sup>56</sup> This belief is grounded in the whole of Scripture and explains human life and dignity by referring both to creation and destiny. It encompasses the whole process of human living, human life, including redemption and sanctification by God, which are manifestations specific only to human beings,<sup>57</sup> and no Biblical writer suggests that animals bear the image of God; animals therefore do not share the dignity of being created as *imago Dei*.<sup>58</sup> Human nature belongs to each and every human being, and "that nature is such that the mature and properly formed possessors of that nature resemble God with respect to their capacity for exercising dominion. To bear the image of God is to have that sort of nature. Non-human animals have a nature, but not that sort. Something may have gone awry with human nature in one's own case, so that one lacks those capacities; but one does not, one that account, lack human nature" (Wolterstorff 2008:350).<sup>59</sup>

The wish of God to redeem all of humanity to a life of sanctification and dignity is the essence of the Christian theology. The wish of God for his human children is expressed in John 17,<sup>60</sup> where the invitation from Christ to all is to a humanity that may be endowed with dignity; a gift that was bestowed by God on each person in his or her creation and forms the very essence of being human and hereby forms the central ground for well-being of the person.<sup>61</sup> God declared that the world is good, and he will continue to declare so (Van Ruler 1989:141). This goodness includes the human beings living with bestowed dignity.<sup>62</sup>

The New Testament (NT) places Christ at the centre of an eschatological vision of a larger mystery that is being revealed to the eyes of faith (Soulen and Woodhead 2006:20), of which the process of deification, *theosis*, through the work of the Holy Spirit, forms the port of departure. This extraordinary Christian hope and sanctification include the formation of

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<sup>56</sup> "Christ stands in our place. He also takes form in us" (Van Ruler 1989:44).

<sup>57</sup> "In the biblical-reformational vision, we do not live orientated to God vertically, towards eternity. We live before God's face, horizontally, in time. This life is sanctified to become the image of God (Van Ruler 1989:108).

<sup>58</sup> Psalm 8 in the Bible, as well as the Book of Ben Sira, 17:3ff, as quoted in Wolterstorff 2008:346.

<sup>59</sup> In the "image of God" concept, the Divine claim upon human beings is expressed" (Louw 2015:106). The perspective by Van Ruler proclaims this belief as follows: "Fortunately we are not human beings in order to become Christians, but we are Christians in order to become 'human'" (Van Ruler 1989:132).

<sup>60</sup> "...created reality is able once again to exist genuinely because of the substitutionary work of the atonement. The work of the Spirit is directed precisely to this 'once again'. It is the Spirit who makes us alive again" (Van Ruler 1989:82).

<sup>61</sup> God declared that the world is good, and he will continue to declare so (Van Ruler 1989:141). This goodness includes the human beings living with bestowed dignity as the crown on creation.

<sup>62</sup> This gift has to be accepted by each person as a decision of acceptance in a confrontation with the living God. See the argument in the work of Tillich Paul (Tillich 1952:165.). Human dignity is part of human nature, and a human being always possesses some form of human nature, even if they have fallen into sin or do not possess the capacity of dominion.

human dignity in people and the manifestation thereof in human actions, but this Christian perspective is not within secular imaging.

From this perspective, human dignity is seen as a creational gift or endowment from God that forms the essence of the human being. It is not something that can be demanded or assumed, it is not an attribute, characteristic or capacity. It is a qualitative as well as a quantitative concept that reflects the extent to which the potential to be transformed into the image of God has been realised in a human being (Soulen and Woodhead 2006:22). This frees the concept of human dignity from both the different views that dignity is ascribed to a person, or that dignity can be taken away from a person. A long history of interpretation in the Christian church holds that the new humankind lost the image of God when Adam fell into sin, but this view does not take into account the love of God and His recreational work for each and every human being he created.<sup>63</sup>

This theological perspective and understanding can only be developed and understood within the drama of the relationship between God and humanity in God's history with his creation. What God wills for his creation "is reality, namely that we become his [sic] image ... Then God does not only express himself [sic] in us, but then we also express him [sic] in ourselves" (Van Ruler 1989:147). Acts against the divine in ourselves will then be actions of denials of Godself (Schwäbel 2006:55). God as well as humankind is seen as a mystery, and attempts to define or delimit what is human must be resisted, as it attempts to foreclose on human-divine possibility (Schwäbel 2006:21).<sup>64</sup> The source of human dignity for the purposes of this analysis is therefore placed within the Christian theological context and viewed from a Christian anthropological viewpoint. Although the secular sources and roots of human dignity are acknowledged, the focus is through the lens of human dignity as the inalienable essence of a human being that has the potential to manifest in the wide variety of human living.

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<sup>63</sup> This realisation and manifestation of human dignity will follow the acceptance by a person of the grace of God, through the redemption of Jesus Christ and the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. According to Martin Luther, "(b)eing justified by faith is the true definition of what it means to be human", and therefore also of what it means to possess human dignity (Schwäbel 2006:56). Through God's work, human nature becomes fulfilled through participation in God. The process of divinisation and therefore growing manifestation of the God within, including the dignity of God within the person is historically more well-known and celebrated in the Eastern churches (Woodhead 2006:233). Divinisation, or taking on the form of Christ, including the manifestation of growing dignity, shares in the mystery of God and can, as with Godself, never be pinned down in a final definition. The dignity of God can be called a part of the essence of God, and may also defy definition, as Godself defies complete human understanding. God will always be beyond the human grasp and will always contain an element of mystery.

<sup>64</sup> In the utter indignity of the cross where Christ was violated, humanity may die with Christ to a dignity defined by the eternal love of God (Schwäbel 2006:55).

The dignity that human beings have is an affirmation of the image of God within them. The humanity of God is bestowed on human beings and may be understood according to Van Ruler's exclamation: "Fortunately! We are not human in order to become Christians, but we are Christians in order to become human" (Van Ruler 1989:132).

The implication of grounding human rights in God suggests that every person is valuable simply because he or she is the *object of the love of God*. The ontological existence of the unconditional love of God is the root of human dignity (Louw 2013:6-8). No human capacity or characteristic is needed to obtain this love and this can be called a relational worth or bestowed worth, as it is the result of being loved by God on God's initiative.<sup>65</sup> The human dignity in and of each person as created and continually being recreated in the *imago Dei* forms the lens for this analysis.

## 2.5 Defining Human Rights and Human Dignity

It is clear that an intimate relationship exists between the concepts "human rights" and "human dignity", and that the use of the one may imply the presence of the other. In order to understand and differentiate between the concepts of human rights and human dignity, the following will be used as operative terms in this analysis.

Moltmann views human rights as the quest for freedom, justice and equality, while he sees human dignity to be concerned with the impact of these issues on the life of the individual (Moltmann 1984b:9). It can be stated that human rights can be seen as plural, while human dignity is singular. The dignity of humanity is, according to Moltmann, the only indivisible, inalienable and shared quality of the human being (Moltmann 1984b:31).<sup>66</sup>

As an *operative description of human rights*, the following is offered:

Human rights are attached to the status of being a human being, a member of the species *homo sapiens*. It makes no difference how or why a right is attached to the status. Being a human being gives one a right (Wolterstorff 2008:313).

An *operative description of human dignity* is presented in the following views:

"Human dignity, which is the same everywhere and for everyone, grounds the indivisibility of all categories of human rights" (Habermas 2012:77); and according to Wolfgang Huber,

<sup>65</sup> God's love is benevolent and the successful benevolence of God's love enhances worth. "But the enhancement does not consist simply in the person's being an object of benevolence; it consists in some alteration in her or her life that the lover causes" (Wolterstorff 2008:359).

<sup>66</sup> "Through the process of reconciliation, human dignity and rights are restored in this inhuman world" (Louw 2015a:90). The *principles* of human dignity, underlying human rights, are given by Louw as the right to life, the right to a humane living and the right to free association and expression (Louw 2015a:122).

“(t)he concept of human dignity is among the most controversial in the language of ethics and politics. Yet those whose dignity has been disregarded or even trampled on know full well what human dignity means” (Huber 1996:10). This view is supported by Koopman, who states that “(i)ts meaning is established by the denial of it” (Koopman 2015:133).

It becomes clear that the essence of human dignity is complex and that the manifestation of human dignity is beyond measurement. It also becomes clear from the views of various scholars that human dignity underpins the concept of human rights. It therefore follows that all human rights are grounded in human dignity.<sup>67</sup>

In understanding the social and political situation in South Africa as well as the comment thereon by the three films, the inhabitational (or inherent), relational and identity-forming content of human dignity will be explained. In applying human dignity as a lens, the particular focus of the producer to search for the manifestations of this content in society becomes clear. The consequent unmasking of the violations of human dignity probably resulted as an unintentional consequence of the unmasking of cultural and political injustices.

## **2.6 The Content of Human Dignity**

### **2.6.1 The *Inhabitational* Content of Human Dignity**

The Christian view that God becomes embodied in the human being, due to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, results in human dignity becoming a matter of inhabitational theology (Louw 2015:97). This is a pneumatological perspective, rather than a Christological perspective, that views the Spirit as seeking to take form in humanity, to take form in the thoughts, deeds and actions of persons (Van Ruler 1989:330).<sup>68</sup>

From incarnational theology, this leads to inhabitational theology. This can be described as the formation of Christ in a person by the working of the Holy Spirit. Human beings are “divine realities” no less than Jesus Christ who is Godself, and as much as all of created

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<sup>67</sup> According to Louw, dignity provides concreteness to human rights discourses (Louw 2015:135), and in systematic theology, human dignity is mostly viewed as an ethical issue. The following basic rights are assumed for human beings: access to life-sustaining means (food, water), basic medical services and the right to free association, plus access to economic development, the right to safety and security, access to knowledge and learning and to basic infrastructure, freedom of religious expression and the right to democratic participation from a position of individual responsibility. Without these rights, dignity cannot be nurtured in order to safeguard the value and quality of our being human (Louw 2012:166 and 167).

<sup>68</sup> According to Thomas Aquinas, integrity (“integritas”), harmony (“consonantia”) and clarity (“claritas”) can be described as the principles of beauty. Life can be described as poetic imaging (Louw 2015:101). The point of departure for this perspective is not the creation paradigm, but the re-creational paradigm of eschatological thinking (Louw 2015:107).

reality is. Humanity is, or shall become in one way or another, a dwelling place for God in the Spirit (Van Ruler 1989:27).<sup>69</sup>

The Holy Spirit creates a theological “osmosis” between God and human beings, where the object is the salvation of the “humanum” (humanity).<sup>70</sup> Pneumatic anthropology<sup>71</sup> describes the spiritual wholeness and determines the quality of human dignity (Louw 2015:125), also and in its essence within society. To be busy with the questions of culture and with issues of society is to be fully and properly busy with humanity itself and not merely with a product of humanity, as individual persons also possess their humanity outside themselves, in community, as humanity is manifested in the participation in culture (Van Ruler 1989:119).<sup>72</sup>

It is clear from a Biblical perspective that the living God is at least every bit as interested in the communal aspects of human existence as in the individual aspects (Van Ruler 1989:119).<sup>73</sup> This interest of God in humanity and community also encompasses the political activities of human beings, and this space has been described as the meeting place where God and human beings are closest together (Van Ruler 1989:123); the participation of Christians in culture can be described not as a matter of evangelisation or conversion to the Christian church, but as a concern for culture itself.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, the way in which Christians participate in culture in the daily processes of living is a consequence of the indwelling of God, of the *inhabitation* of God, and may manifest in the humanity and the human dignity of human beings.

## 2.6.2 *Identity as Content of Human Dignity*

Creation was declared by God to be excellent and good (Genesis 1), with mankind created in God’s image. It follows that each human being was created *with* dignity, not with a claim to dignity, but already *with* the essence of dignity as embodied in the human being due to the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (Louw 2015:97).

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<sup>69</sup> Van Ruler never tires of insisting that God’s works are reflected in and can be recognised in the concrete forms of human existence (Van Ruler 1989:xi).

<sup>70</sup> “...it is therefore the triune God himself, the entire trinity, that dwells within us” (Van Ruler 1989:55).

<sup>71</sup> “The pneumatological understanding of the humanum is that human dignity is a spiritual and inclusive category” (Louw 2013:11).

<sup>72</sup> Definition of culture: “Culture is activity, a playful engagement of human beings with the earthly, material reality and nothing else” (Van Ruler 1989:116).

<sup>73</sup> Human conduct and human actions then become a consequence of *Parousia*, not a condition. (Louw 2015:97).

<sup>74</sup> God’s focus is not on the individual Christian and specifically Christian culture; God’s focus is ultimately also not on the Christian church and the congregation, but the ultimate purpose of God focusses on the nations of the world (Van Ruler 1989:125).

The search for identity forms part of the human search for meaning and has been part of human development through history. The word “identity” derives from the Latin *idem*, indicating the *same*, presuming continuity between the human “I” and “my behaviour”.<sup>75</sup> When integration is present in a personality, as part of identity, it is the consequence of congruency as a result of being faithful to oneself, communicating authenticity and truth (Heitink 1977:69) where the actions and a belief system correlate.<sup>76</sup>

The term “human” stands for the capability to have empathy, solidarity and cooperation (Huber 1996:118), while “humanity” refers to the fact that human beings can say: “I” (Louw 2013:9). The individual therefore lives as “I” within community and find their identity in God and in their community.

The self-assent of the person, of experiencing the world, of an *enthusiasm* for being, may be the result of a person living with the eschatological, ontological as well as epistemological hope in the face of in this triune God of the Bible. “The Spirit is poured out and dwells with us and in us ... this brings with it a certainty in the form of enthusiasm for being. We have a zest for the world” (Van Ruler 1989:39). Eschatological and ontological hope provides integrity and results in enthusiasm for life.<sup>77</sup> Living within the grace of God provides the spiritual and even psychic energy for meaningful living to the individual and to the community with a shared eschatological perspective. This enthusiasm forms a central part of the identity of a person and a community (Louw 2015:108, 112).

Identity is connected to the values of inter- and intra-communication and is a qualitative concept. Human dignity and human identity should therefore be viewed as interconnected and as relational categories, while identity and a sense of self cannot be separated from the human reaction to the degree and quality of human *responsibility* (Louw 2015:114-116). This responsibility is different from the emphasis on human responsibility and autonomy that is the fruit of the Enlightenment. The conflict lies in the question whether God’s glory and genuine human freedom and responsibility can be honoured at the same time.<sup>78</sup> The core principle that qualifies the ethos in the human being is the reaction to responsibility and the actions that follow on decisions taken. These decisions human beings take cannot be separated from moral decision-making that reflects a future orientation by human beings with

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<sup>75</sup> Human beings were created by God as “beings” and not as human “doings”; therefore, the identity of “who I am” is more fundamental than the question of “what should I do?” (Louw 2015:95).

<sup>76</sup> Integrated personalities manifest congruent behaviour in society.

<sup>77</sup> “Enthusiasm” can be called “God within us” (Louw 2015:112).

<sup>78</sup> Van Ruler 1989:XL. This seemingly paradoxical human situation can be integrated by the Holy Spirit in the lives of people that will lead to integrated Christian lives. (See discussion by Evers 2015:216-242).



anticipation for the future.<sup>79</sup> The quality of decision-making, one's philosophy in life (commitments), one's personal capacity (gifts/charisma) and one's vocation and vision will play a fundamental role within the networking of human dignity and human identity (Louw 2013:8-10), and the quality of human reaction is the answer to the identity of a person.<sup>80</sup>

In the Christian view, identity results in an eschatological view with an ontological spiritual base that becomes embodied and exhibited in the fruits of the Holy Spirit.<sup>81</sup>

### 2.6.3 The *Relational* Content of Human Dignity

The Christian view of what it means to be human is rooted in the comprehensive view of reality in relation to God (Koopman 2010:232). This relationality is the scriptural recognition that human existence is constituted by relation with God, oneself, neighbours and the whole of the created world. It is possible to distinguish three positions from which the human being relates to God, i.e., the creature in God's image as intended, the creature that has fallen in sin and out of the relationship with God, and the creature that is restored to God by Christ's action and is in a new relation with God in redemption and sanctification (Koopman 2010: 231-233). As such, human dignity does not have individual action as its originating source, but originates in Godself and must always be placed within community.

The relational grounds of human existence can be stated with the words: "I am human, in that I am related in a network of relations to other humans beings". A person can only be a *person* in the occurrence of community with other people (Mays 2006:59). It seems thus as though community is a condition of personal existence, and therefore a condition of human dignity, as human dignity is invested in personhood. "Human dignity is not 'something' external to our being. On the contrary, human dignity is an essential part of the quality of human relationships as embedded in the processes of mutual sharing. These processes are determined by the quality of disposition, attitude, aptitude as well as the ethical dimension of our being human" (Louw 2012:165).

The *oikos*,<sup>82</sup> household or community, is a God-given place for living a human life, a place of community and therefore also a place where dignity is grounded. The restoration of *oikos* by the process of reconciliation will provide the space for dignity. The Kingdom and community thus meet in Christ. The covenant that God has made with God's people connects human beings to one another, to humanity, to creation and it also connects the current generations

<sup>79</sup> Animals do not make moral decisions (Louw 2015:119).

<sup>80</sup> *Respondo ergo sum*, "I react, therefore I am".

<sup>81</sup> Galatians 5:22-26.

<sup>82</sup> The fullness of life is connected to the concept "oikos", as it refers to God's promises to humankind (Mays 2006:86).

to the future generations. To be part of community is also a gift from God to human beings. It springs from the very essence of God, as God's own life can be described as a life of communion within Godself, being God, Son and Holy Spirit (Reinders 2006:135).<sup>83</sup>

The quality of life is enhanced by the fostering of human dignity, and as the grace of God is not only a "spiritual issue" but also a "social issue", this dignity can be embodied in the structures and interaction of society within community (Louw 2012:163-165). This dignity may be embraced and celebrated, but may also be harmed, violated or abused.

## **2.7 Indignity as the Denial of *Self*, the *other* and the *Other***

Irenaeus differentiates between the *image of God*, already received in creation, and the *likeness of God*, into which a person might grow. This process of growing into God's likeness can be lost in the process of living,<sup>84</sup> of which the greatest threat is destructive disintegration of the self that leads to self-deception and hypocrisy (Soulen and Woodhead 2006:181). The failure to grow towards God and dignity may result in growth towards the opposite direction, into the self.

The dignity of a person can be violated by himself or herself not growing into the essence of the self, as was envisaged by God for each. The failure to acknowledge the triune God as Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and Godself as the ontological essence of personhood constitutes a violation in itself. This may result in the content and actions of a person manifesting as the broken relationship with God, in what the Bible calls "sin". It is because these actions drive a person away from God into the self that it can be described as a violation of the self. The actions then manifest as indignant behaviour before God, tarnishing the image of God in the self. (The human tendency to sin is the tendency to grow away from God and to tarnish the *imago Dei*). This causes the suffering of the *imago Dei*. When redemption is absent, it leaves human beings anxious and hungering for what may be called universality. This is a frustrated desire for the divine presence, and at worst may lead to confusion and anxiety, both symptoms of isolation from God (Soulen and Woodhead 2006:238).

The relationality of human life and living in community places the person in a social status to others. This then implies that a person, possessing the dignity endowed to him or her by

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<sup>83</sup> God offers this community as a way to freedom, to be free to one another. "The possibility of ontological freedom is only realized in our union with God that is realized in Christ" (Zizioulas as quoted in Reinders 2006:135). Therefore, being in community is a relation grounded in an act of communion between beings with different identities.

<sup>84</sup> Human dignity can be threatened by anxiety, fear of rejection, isolation and existential loneliness (Louw 2015:123).



God, is due *respect* and *acknowledgement* by others. Although a person cannot be robbed of human dignity, the acknowledgement thereof can be withdrawn and this may lead to vulnerability (Fischer 2015:72-73): “Being human is a *normative status* which cannot be taken away by depriving a human being of the *factual* acknowledgement as a human being. We cannot deprive a human being of being human” (Fischer 2015:73). By causing indignity to another is to tarnish the *imago Dei* in both the receiver and the perpetrator, as such action tarnishes the humanity of both.

Violating an entity’s rights may or may not degrade it, but what it does is to demean it, and the violation of human rights is then manifest in the demeaning of the *other* (Wolterstorff 2008:363). Both groups and entities may be found to violate the rights and dignity of others or another group, including state, business corporations, universities, ethnic groups and more, by driving them from their homeland, depriving them of their own state or refusing civil rights to them (Wolterstorff 2008:365).<sup>85</sup> “A person wrongs another if and only if (while acting as a responsible agent) she treats him in a way that is objectively ... demeaning, that is disrespectful of that person’s worth” (Hampton 1988:43- 44).

Showing *disrespect* is active, and not the mere absence of respect. However, when respect is not given/shown when the situation calls one to “pay respect”, it also constitutes disrespect. It may present in different forms, such as insulting remarks, belittling or dismissive comments, physical or emotional abuse, silence when words are expected, or ignoring the other. Inflicting disrespect is to treat someone in a way that is incompatible with the acknowledgement of the true worth of a person (Wolterstorff 2008:297). Oppressors may regard their victims as objects, not as human beings, and the perpetrators may not see themselves as violating the rights of fellow human beings. They may see themselves not as being inhuman, but as discriminating between the true human beings and the pseudo-human beings, the *other*.<sup>86</sup>

When people are robbed of their human dignity as the result of human actions by others against them and their dignity, a violation of the human dignity of such a person is the result.

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<sup>85</sup> Injustice is not the only cause of human suffering and to suffer because of being wronged, it must be able to lay the action against the account of a person or a social entity (Wolterstorff 2008:286).

<sup>86</sup> Analyses by Richard Rorty on the Bosnian situation were cited by Wolterstorff: The Serbs were not doing the atrocious deeds against human beings, but against “Muslims”. “Deep in humanity is the impulse to regard those human beings who are members of one’s in-group as having a right to be treated in certain ways that those human beings who are members of some or all out-groups lack. The rights of members of the in-group are seen as natural rights; they would have those rights even if there had been no human legislation that conferred those rights on them. There is something about Greeks, something about Athenians, something about white people, something about Arians, something about Serbs that sets them apart and gives them an inherent dignity that others lack. That dignity grounds the rights of members of the in-group (Wolterstorff 2008:318). Such purported rights are seen, then, as natural rights that are not human rights for all.

Such actions can also be called the “manifestation of the incapability to recognise God in the life of the other”. The inability to respect God, or the under-respect shown to God, is to wrong someone of vastly greater worth than a human being. Such action is to violate the dignity, the humanity of Godself and can be described as the violation of the human dignity of the *Other*.

Indignity, or the violations of human dignity, can therefore in various forms be enacted against the *self*, the *other* and the *Other*.

## 2.8 Conclusion

Every human being has been endowed by God with the gift of human dignity, as each person is formed as *imago Dei*, in the image of God. Through time, human rights have also been developed within human cultures. Although the claims for human rights have been built on both secular and theistic grounds, the theistic view that the source of human rights is human dignity grounded in the *image Dei* is accepted as premise for this investigation. Another premise that follows is that the human dignity of a person may be violated, but cannot be stripped or robbed, as this is not an attribute, but the essence of the humanity of a person.

The actions within cultures manifest in the products of different cultures, and these manifestations reveal the content and meaning of a culture. Sometimes this revelation of the essence of a society is clear an open, especially in a culture with no or little restraints on expression and beliefs. In other cases, the essence of society is not clear, but can be revealed by the unmasking of underlying forces, ideologies, beliefs and more.

Film is a product of the culture and of the society from within which it is produced.<sup>87</sup> Where film is applied as an instrument in analysing culture and in commenting on culture, unmasking may reveal what is not openly displayed in the day-to-day living within such a culture and community. This may be in the form of a process, taking the viewer through the four different movements of *observing* society in its daily living, *interpreting* the dynamics within culture, *anticipating* hope or the lack thereof, as well as the film’s possibility to *transform* society.

With this in mind, the rest of the thesis will focus on the three Afrikaans films, as products of the Afrikaner culture, which were released during the 1960s in South Africa and which deliberately unmasked the violations against the human dignity of persons and certain

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<sup>87</sup> “(T)he study of films can be a powerful tool for the study of the culture in which they were produced” (Marsh 1997:12).

groups in the country. This study will observe and comment on these films through the lens of human dignity. These films reflected the reality of life in South Africa, with specific focus on the white, Coloured and Indian communities and the interaction between these different groups. These films, and the message offered, can only be understood against the historical background of the conflicted country at the time.

## **Chapter 3: Human Dignity within the Context of History and Afrikaner Identity**

The years 1960 to 1976 was a tumultuous period in the history of SA and has been capped by two historically significant tragedies, from Sharpeville (1960) to Soweto (1976). These circumstances developed over time with specific social and political forces at play, which were the result of historical dynamics. As comment on society, within the context of historical forces, the films under discussion endeavoured to unmask the intricate Afrikaner identity and the injustices of the government policy of apartheid during this period, with the lens sharply focussed on violations against the Coloured and Indian communities.

The comment and artful unmasking by these films should be seen against this historical, economic, cultural and religious background where the artist endeavoured to isolate consequences of actions that violated the humanity of people, as it violated the identity, relations and belief systems of others, of themselves and of the Other.

### **3.1 Internal Context**

Within the borders of SA the focus falls on four fields where the impact of the social changes and developments during this period manifested, namely on the political front, within the economic circumstances, against a cultural background and within the influences of the Afrikaans churches.

#### **3.1.1 Political Background**

The political developments leading to the policy of apartheid and the concretisation thereof in society form the milieu against which the three films were produced.

##### **3.1.1.1 Introduction**

The Nationalist Party, under the leadership of Dr D F Malan, came to power by a narrow margin in the Union of South Africa in 1948 (Giliomee 2003:487). The party relied on the rural Afrikaner vote in the elections, as the Afrikaners at that stage was a rural people.<sup>88</sup>

The 1948 election was not about race issues. The Afrikaner people were fighting an election against the English-speaking part of the community, and in a broader sense, against

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<sup>88</sup> Approximately a third of the economically active Afrikaners still worked on farms. The profile of Afrikaners in 1950 reflected the following: 57% of the white population, 29% of total personal income, about 30% worked on farms, 40% in blue collar and manual jobs, 27% in white collar jobs. The English community provided 46% of total personal income. The African population formed 68% of the population, providing 20% of the income (Giliomee 2003:489).

England herself. Although the Anglo-Boer War between the Boer Republics and England (1899-1902) was long past, it was not forgotten, and although South Africa was a Union within the British Commonwealth of Nations (Commonwealth), a fierce hope and aspiration to become an independent Republic prevailed in the Afrikaner circles.<sup>89</sup> The 1948 election was rather fought against the perceived discrimination against Afrikaners by the United Party Government, on the issues of food shortages and rationing and on the treatment of ex-servicemen.<sup>90</sup>

The vote in South Africa remained in the hands of whites after South Africa became a Union in 1910, and it became clear to the new government after 1948 that they would have to develop the *reserves*, traditional black areas, in order to justify white franchise and the denial of black voting rights.<sup>91</sup> This policy of moving people into separate living areas, with separate rights, became known as apartheid and later on as *separate development*. It was based on two different sources of justification, both from within the Afrikaner community. On the one hand were those with the quest to keep all non-white people out of power who can be described as crude apartheid supporters (racists), keeping blacks and coloured people “down”.<sup>92</sup> On the other hand were the apartheid visionaries or theorists who wanted to honour and recognize the non-white’s dignity and to rehabilitate this in “homelands”, with a separate future that included political power, with the belief that apartheid offered more opportunities for the subordinates than they would get in a common system where they would suffer pervasive discrimination (Giliomee 2003:481-482, 513).

The nationalism of Afrikaners became the inspiration for the formation of their identity and policy during the following years, and this included a quest to self-rule and complete freedom from England, also symbolically. The new government initiated changes and after the 1948

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<sup>89</sup> During the entire election campaign, Dr Malan, as leader of the Nationalist Party referred to apartheid only once, stating that the question was “whether there could be apartheid at the same time as justice, peace and co-operation between whites and non-whites” (Giliomee 2003:480).

<sup>90</sup> The Afrikaners were still relatively impoverished after the Second World War and after the previous world-wide economic recession (Giliomee 2003:481).

<sup>91</sup> The roots of apartheid may be traced back to the Glen Gray Act, passed by Cecil John Rhodes in 1894, assigning separate and segregated areas for exclusive African use, disenfranchising them and controlling their economic options. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Cecil-Rhodes###oc6154>, Accessed 20/6/2017.

<sup>92</sup> A Report by the *Suid-Afrikaanse Buro vir Rasse Aangeleenthede* (*The South African Bureau of Race Relations*) (SABRA), an institution formed in 1948 at the initiative of the *Afrikaner Broederbond* to plan racial policy and positive race relations for the country, mentioned in 1952 that “a comparatively large part of the European population wants and makes use of Natives as labourers, but pays little attention to their welfare and future” (Giliomee 2003:513). This report included both Afrikaans and English speakers.

election, the civil service, including the Defence Force, quickly became Afrikanerised (Giliomee 2003:494), cementing the Afrikaner hold on power.<sup>93</sup>

During the years following the 1948 election, a number of laws were passed by Parliament that had far-reaching political impact, internally as well as internationally. By 1960, the country was ruled by the so-called apartheid laws<sup>94</sup> that *inter alia* prohibited “mixed” marriages, outlawed intercourse across racial lines, suppressed the South African Communist Party and communist support and activity, forced people into racial classification and forced the use of living conditions and separate public facilities by race. About the registration of race, two views prevailed at that stage. Jan Smuts, former South African Prime Minister (PM) and world renowned statesman, commented that this was “an attempt to classify the unclassifiable” as opposed to the view voiced in the Afrikaans press as a comment by Dawie, opinion former in *Die Burger*, who commented in 1956 that “I am still waiting for anyone to give a single example of someone who was unreasonably classified” (Giliomee 2003:504).<sup>95</sup>

These regulations and laws severely restricted the movement and labour of people and acted as a restraint on the development of human potential.<sup>96</sup> At the same time, traditionally

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<sup>93</sup> British citizenship for South Africans was abolished as well as the right to vote for the *Privy Council* in England (1950); the *Union Jack* and *God Save the Queen* were scrapped in 1951, the management of the naval facility at Simon’s Town harbour was taken over by SA in 1957 and the British currency was replaced by the South African Rand in 1961 (Giliomee 2003:494).

<sup>94</sup> These laws included the following: The Suppression of Communism Act, 1950, which prohibited communists from holding positions in any service or trade union; The Group Areas Act, 1950, which made provision for the gradual introduction of residential segregation of whites, Indians, Coloureds and Bantu. Persons of one group were not allowed to own or occupy property in the controlled area of another group, except under permit; The Population Registration Act, 1950, which introduced a system of registration for all persons resident in the Republic. The Identity Card that was issued included the photograph of the holder and details of the racial group to which he/she belonged; The Immorality Amendment Act, 1950, which prohibited sexual relations between whites and non-whites. Previously the act applied to whites and Bantu only, but it was then extended to the Coloured group as well; The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, 1949, which prohibited marriages between whites and non-whites; The Bantu Authorities Act (Urban and Rural), 1951, which extended self-rule to Bantu communities; The Group Areas Act, 1957, which consolidated the law relating to the establishment of group areas, the control of the acquisition of immovable property and the occupation of land and premises; The Reservation Separate Public Amenities Act, 1953, whereby public amenities were designated to be used by the different racial groups only; The Industrial Conciliation Act, 1956 (Job reservation), (Drury 1968:106-107).

<sup>95</sup> The impact caused by these laws was felt by all. During the 1960-1982 removal of 65 000 Coloured people from District Six in Cape Town, the minister in charge, P W Botha, reacted that “You must thank me for what I have done, because now you are living in dignity”, ignoring the humiliation of powerlessness of a people forcefully removed to foreign areas (Giliomee 2003:506). Such figures in the government were of the belief that they were indeed not only recognising dignity, but through this policy, endowing dignity on people.

<sup>96</sup> Jobs in any sector were not available to all, as “job reservation” was restricting employment. Already in 1954, Dr H F Verwoerd, at that stage the Minister of Native Affairs, was of the conviction that as for the black child, there is “no place for him [sic] above certain forms of labour” (Giliomee 2003:508).

urbanised blacks were permanently residing in white areas, and they were considered as the country's black elite (Giliomee 2003:511).<sup>97</sup>

### 3.1.1.2 The Period 1960 to 1976

During the year of 1960, a compilation of historical events took place that influenced the history of not only South Africa, but also of the Afrikaner. In January, the worst mining accident in the country's history traumatised the country when 435 miners, most of them Afrikaners, were trapped and died underground in the Coalbrook Mine of the Clydesdale Colliery.<sup>98</sup> An assassination attempt on the life of Verwoerd took place, but failed (he was hospitalised but made a complete recovery) (Pretorius 2014:342); the British Prime Minister visited South Africa and gave a historical "Winds of Change" speech in Parliament, rejecting the official government policy;<sup>99</sup> the white voters in the country went to the polls to decide about becoming a Republic; and the Sharpeville riots erupted. The African National Congress (ANC) disbanded before it could be banned as a political organisation in 1960 (Pretorius 2014:344),<sup>100</sup> and the Cottlesloe Consultation took place (Vosloo 2011:1). The influences of these events during 1960 dictated the internal political developments over the next fifteen years.

The wish amongst Afrikaners to become fully independent from the United Kingdom, which has been viewed as the enemy for a number of generations, resulted in a referendum to become a republic amongst whites, English and Afrikaners, and a "yes" vote was won, indicating English support for the Republic.<sup>101</sup> The vote was never to include any person of colour, as, according to Verwoerd, "(w)hen I talk about the nation, I talk about the White

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<sup>97</sup> In 1954, the Tomlinson Report was presented to the Government. The Report was set up as "a comprehensive scheme for the rehabilitation of the Native Areas with a view to developing within them a social structure in keeping with the culture of the Native and based upon effective socio-economic planning" (Pretorius 2014: 338-339). This was a study commissioned by the SA government (Dr Malan as PM) to look into the economic viability of the "reserves" (later called "bantustans") into which the government intended to confine the black population (Giliomee 2003:515-519). When the report was tabled, Dr Verwoerd as Minister of Native Affairs strongly criticised the recommendations of the Report, while the African National Congress (ANC) also strongly opposed the assumption of racial segregation. Acceptance of the recommendations could have changed history, as the report concluded that the "tribal system" and traditional "rule" was not suitable for a modern industrial state (Pretorius 2014:338).

<sup>98</sup> This was experienced as a severe trauma by most Afrikaners.

<sup>99</sup> This was the first repudiation of South Africa's internal policy of apartheid by a country that had important trade and political relations with SA and it has also been called one of the defining statements of British foreign policy in the twentieth century (The Guardian 4/4/2007).

<sup>100</sup> Both the ANC and the PAC were declared unlawful organisations on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 1960 (Pretorius 2014: 344).

<sup>101</sup> The newly found bond between Afrikaners and English-speaking South Africans was not exploited or developed from the side of the government. Most of the English-speakers still supported the opposition parties in politics, of which the United Party was the strongest, but the opposition politics started the move into a process of disintegration (The UP finally came to an end in 1977) (Giliomee 2003:521).



people of South Africa”, thereby rejecting the Coloured people as part of the “nation” (Giliomee 2003:512).<sup>102</sup> The Union became the Republic of South Africa on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1961 (Die Burger 31/5/1961), while the constitution of the Republic differed very little from that of the previous Union, with no immediate change in domestic policy.

The second attempt on Verwoerd’s life was successful and he was assassinated on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1966 in Parliament (Giliomee 2003:530).<sup>103</sup> John Vorster succeeded Verwoerd as Prime Minister in 1966 and he was of a different temperament, style and disposition. He viewed black and white persons as human beings, “rather than abstractions”, and soon after he came to power, he declared the policy of apartheid not as an end in itself, but the “retention, maintenance and immortalization of Afrikaner identity” (Giliomee 2003:557). However, the internal and external threats to the political power of the government were not perceived as less,<sup>104</sup> and during 1969 military conscription was introduced for all white males.<sup>105</sup> During the mid-1960s, the white people in SA were living in a democracy, with civil rights, high-level education and administrative services in place, while black, Indians and Coloured South Africans experienced an authoritarian state (Giliomee 2003:551-553).

Apart from the few individual stray voices from within the Afrikaner community,<sup>106</sup> the homogeneity within Afrikaner culture grew and reached the so-called “heyday of apartheid” in the middle to late 1960s.<sup>107</sup> However, some differences of muted Afrikaner opposition to the policy of the National Party manifested in the Afrikaans press. The more traditionally liberal views from the Cape, voiced in *Die Burger*, became reflected in *Die Beeld*, a newly formed country-wide Sunday newspaper published in the northern province of Transvaal (1965-1970). The editor of this paper, Schalk Pienaar, commenced to criticize certain of the

<sup>102</sup> The reaction to this by a Coloured leader, Dr Richard van der Ross was that “in future no non-white South African need regard *Die Stem* as his [sic] national anthem or the South African flag as his [sic] flag.” (Quoted by Giliomee 2003:512, from Van der Ross, 1984:102,181).

<sup>103</sup> The assassin was later to be found unbalanced and to be declared a patient of the state. Dimitri Tsafendas died as a state patient on 7/10/1999 (Die Burger 8/10/1999).

<sup>104</sup> By 1961, John Vorster as Minister of Justice had granted detention rights to the state, including the listing and banning of individuals and organisations, while house arrest was also added to the system. Solitary confinement was approved and detention without trial was prolonged to a period of 180 days, which later became unlimited (Giliomee 2003:532).

<sup>105</sup> This started a counter action which was mostly driven by the *End Conscription Campaign* (Giliomee 2003:551).

<sup>106</sup> From the Afrikaner community, support for the ANC and its ideals was manifested by Bram Fischer, a well-known Afrikaner of impeccable Afrikaner roots. He never denied his roots and supported the reverend Beyers Naudé in a letter in 1965. “How strange it might sound today, it is not impossible that one day we will work for the Afrikaner people together”. He was also sentenced in 1965 to life imprisonment, and stated at his trial: “I speak as an Afrikaner” (Giliomee 2003:533-534). He died in 1975.

<sup>107</sup> By the late 1960s, between 83 to 96 per cent of Afrikaners agreed that multiracial democracy was not practical and that blacks were not inferior, but “different” by nature (Giliomee 2003:534).



government policies (Giliomee 2003:535) and this influenced Afrikaans readers in the Transvaal.

Internally, the policy of separate development led to independence being granted by the South African government to the homelands, and the Transkei became the first independent homeland in 1976 as a showpiece of the success of the policy. No country outside SA recognised Transkei as an independent country (Adam and Giliomee 1979:10).

### 3.1.1.3 Resistance

Resistance against the policy of apartheid grew amongst those who were excluded from government with no vote and political power, culminating in the Sharpeville riots which happened when a march against the hated pass laws was arranged. Various other protests and actions followed.<sup>108</sup>

The African Nationalist Congress founded an armed wing in 1961, *Umkhonto we Ziswe* (MK), under the leadership of Nelson Mandela and in the early 1960s the South African Communist Party and the MK High Command together purchased an isolated farm called Lilliesleaf in Rivonia, to be used as a base for the armed struggle against the apartheid government.<sup>109</sup> The late 1960s also saw resurgence in resistance, emanating from structures within the country that started in 1968 with the establishment of the *South African Black Students Organisation* (SASO) and the *Black People's Convention* (BPC) in 1972. This reorganisation of political structures, especially amongst the youth, led to the Durban strikes of 1973 and later to the student uprising of 1976, also known as the Soweto Uprising.<sup>110</sup> By

<sup>108</sup> The year 1960 was called the "Year of the Pass" by Chief Albert Luthuli, President General of the African National Congress to protest against the pass laws in South Africa (The ANC was formed in 1910 and prompted the black South Africans to establish the African Native National Congress in 1912; in 1923 it became known as the African National Congress (ANC), (Pretorius 2014:259). The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), another organisation against apartheid, planned their own anti-pass campaign under the leadership of Robert Sobukwe. This campaign march (on 30/3/1960) that led to police fire, was held as a non-violent march, as dictated by Sobukwe (Die Burger 1/4/1960 and 9/4/1960). The death toll was 69, while 180 protestors were injured, many seriously. This led to protest marches elsewhere in the country, mostly not violent (Pretorius 2014:380-384). Only at Langa in Cape Town did violence break out, resulting in three deaths and twenty-eight killed. Sharpeville. <http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/sharpeville-massacre-21-march-1960>, Accessed 24/9/2016).

<sup>109</sup> Nelson Mandela had been living at the farm under an assumed name since 1961. The farm was unmasked and led to the Rivonia Trial where different charges against the accused may be summarised as conspiracy to evolutionary warfare and sabotage. Eight defendants were sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964, including Nelson Mandela. In Mandela's speech before sentence he stated: "During my lifetime I have dictated my life to this struggle of the African people, I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons will live together in harmony and in equal opportunity. It is an ideal for which I hope to live for and see realised. But my Lord, if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die" (Pretorius 2014:346).

<sup>110</sup> The "Soweto Uprisings" (Pretorius 2014:346) led to an intensification of the armed struggle, as thousands of youth fled into exile in neighbouring and East Bloc countries, swelling the ranks of MK.

1976, SA was still ruled by the NP and perceived by the majority of South Africans as an oppressive government. Afrikaans became identified as the language of the oppressor. The hatred for Afrikaans was aggravated by the enforcement of Afrikaans in all schools (including black schools) in fifty per cent of the curriculum.<sup>111</sup>

#### 3.1.1.4 The Position of the Coloured People

By the mid-1950s, the Coloured people of SA had been voting on the common voter's role for a century. In 1951, the government initiated a process to remove all Coloureds from a direct vote by creating a separate role whereby they could vote for Members of the House of Assembly as representatives (The Separate Representation of Voters Act), and a process was started whereby Coloured people became disenfranchised in 1956 when the act was finally approved (Pretorius 2014:562).<sup>112</sup>

When the Sharpeville riots occurred in 1960, the Coloured people did not show any direct support for the protestors. It could be that the pass laws (the given reason for the riots) did not affect the Coloured people, as they were not forced to carry the hateful passes (or identity documents) on them. It could also be that they perceived themselves as belonging to the white community.<sup>113</sup> This view was supported by the well-known South African writer and poet, N P van Wyk Louw, stating: "The Coloured people are our people. They belong to us" (Giliomee 2003:526). The question whether Coloured people could be called Afrikaners, included thereby in the Afrikaner identity, thereafter became a divisive issue amongst Afrikaners,<sup>114</sup> on social as well as on political grounds. One view was that Coloureds, as full citizens, should elect their own representatives, but on the other side, the issue was clearly illustrated by Verwoerd flatly rejecting the proposal that coloured people elect their own representatives (Giliomee 2003:526).<sup>115</sup> In 1976, when the Soweto riots erupted, the

<sup>111</sup> Giliomee 2003:578-580 explains this situation in detail.

<sup>112</sup> Various court cases followed the 1951 passing of the act. The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to decide on the matter was initially ruled to be subordinate to Parliament. The Appeal Court overturned this finding, resulting in Parliament constituting itself as a High Court. This step was then reversed by the courts. By constituting the Senate Act (1955) in Parliament, a joint session of the House and Parliament passed the act in 1956 (Pretorius 2014:562).

<sup>113</sup> The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) minister, David Botha, explained this as cultural, political and economic belonging and he advocated that all barriers between whites and Coloureds be removed immediately (Giliomee 2003:526).

<sup>114</sup> The Cilliers Report (for SABRA) was issued, finding that the only viable and just solution was to permit Coloured people to become full citizens with direct representation in Parliament by Coloured members elected by Coloured people. This report was, however, never discussed by SABRA. Coloured children were mostly instructed in Afrikaans, but schools were separated along colour lines. Universities were separated by race and "white" universities could only accept students of "colour" (non-whites) if the course was not offered at any black or Coloured university (Giliomee 2003:510, 526).

<sup>115</sup> In the Afrikaans press, *Die Burger* responded that Verwoerd's attitude had caused the deepest disappointment in twelve years over a particular course a nationalistic leader had taken. The Group Areas Act impacted severely on the Coloured population and by 1966, the removal of Coloureds from

Coloured resistance against apartheid had grown substantially and the Soweto uprising was followed by an uprising on the Cape Flats in support.<sup>116</sup> It became clear that the neutral attitude of the majority of the Coloured population towards the government at the 1960 Sharpeville riots had by 1976, when the Soweto riots occurred, hardened into active opposition, with very little identification with the Afrikaner community.<sup>117</sup>

### 3.1.1.5 The Position of the Indian people

The first Indians were imported to SA as slaves to work in the Cape, by the Dutch East India Company during the seventeenth century. They were, however, few and became absorbed in the Cape Malay population. Between 1860 and 1900, labourers from India came to the British colony of Natal to work on the sugar plantations.<sup>118</sup> Economic competition from Indians caused white hostility from 1894 onwards, when the Indian population in Natal started to exceed the white population. This “threat” was dealt with by the Natal government after it achieved self-government from Britain, by promulgating laws that limited Indian franchise, curbed immigration, restricted trade, imposed heavy taxes and restricted the rights to entry or settlement by Indians (Pretorius 2014:574- 578).

In 1894, the Indian Congress was founded by Mahatma Ghandi, a London educated lawyer who came to SA to assist in a court case. This started a long process of passive resistance by the Indian population against discriminatory laws.<sup>119</sup> The Indian population was politically active, and the first newspaper was already founded by Ghandi in 1903, the *Indian Opinion* (Pretorius 2014:577). In 1955, the South African Indian Congress adopted the nonracial Freedom Charter. Economically, the Indian population grew strong and formed own schools and institutions, thereby developing skills. In 1961, the year that SA became a Republic, the legal position of Indians changed, as they were granted the status of permanent residents.

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a traditionally “coloured” areas in the centre of the Cape Town District Six, had started. About 65 000 (Gilliomme 2003:505, 526) people were removed and scattered in so-called Coloured areas across the Cape Flats (Pretorius 2014:563). By 1971, all Coloured voters were also removed from the municipal voting rolls, with the intention by the government to set up separate Coloured municipalities (Gilliomme 2003:557).

<sup>116</sup> This uprising became violent in the Cape, and more than 100 people died on the streets of Cape Town in the violence, mostly children (Pretorius 2014:570).

<sup>117</sup> The language of the Coloured population in the Cape had traditionally been Afrikaans.

<sup>118</sup> The need for labour arose because the indigenous Zulu people had access to land in the reserves and on Christian missions, and they resisted absorption into the colonial economy (Pretorius 2014:574).

<sup>119</sup> India was part of the British Empire and therefore Indians fought for their rights. In 1910, when the Union of SA was formed, anti-Indian legislation was confirmed. Discriminatory laws included that only Indians born before August 1913 were allowed to enter the Cape Province and that no Indian could live or even spend the night in the Orange Free State (OFS), one of the four provinces of the Union. They had to enter and exit the OFS on the same day (Pretorius 2014:576-577).

By 1968, the South African Indian Council was inaugurated, consisting of nominated members only (Pretorius 2014:582-583).

The Indian people have traditionally been sports-loving, and although Indians were allowed to partake in competitions against or with white athletes, discrimination was enforced by the existing discriminatory laws. The officials were forced to act according to these laws, creating situations that, when it became known to the outside world, resulted in an acceleration of the isolation of SA from international sport (Pretorius 2014:584).<sup>120</sup>

### 3.1.2 Economic Background

The South African economy suffered severely under the aftermaths of the 1933 worldwide recession, with additional negative impact on SA agriculture as a result of the drought in 1933. The majority of Afrikaners were farmers, and the impact of these circumstances led to what was to become known as the “armblanke vraagstuk”, the problem of white impoverishment (Gilliomee 2003:304). These people, mostly Afrikaner farmers and unskilled labour, flocked into the bigger cities in order to survive economically. The call to become a republic by Malan, as well as for the Afrikaners to unite as an interest group, was driven by the Purified National Party as a measure to close the gap between Afrikaner and English wealth, in order to protect the “poor whites” from black economic competition (Adam and Giliomee 1979:112).<sup>121</sup>

The National Party government founded various semi-state organisations to promote Afrikaner economic progress, which substantially aided the Afrikaner’s economic advance.<sup>122</sup> State capitalism grew, and by the middle of 1976 the public share of the economy had nearly doubled since 1948, influencing the growth of Afrikaner capitalism (Adam and Giliomee 1979:166).<sup>123</sup> The decade of 1960 to 1970 was one of remarkable economic growth for

<sup>120</sup> On the sports fields, racial division existed into the 1950s. During the 1960s, nonracial bodies had already been formed. In 1973, Indian officials were involved in the formation of SACOS, the South African Council of Sport, which led the drive to isolate South African sport internationally (Pretorius 2014:584).

<sup>121</sup> Efforts to enhance the economic situation of this group resulted in *inter alia* the founding of the “Reddingsdaadbond”, an institution formed by the Afrikaners to rescue the Afrikaners financially, in 1944, but it was realised that only political power would effectively enhance their economic position (Adam and Giliomee 1979:159). During 1956, job reservation was instituted on the principles that whites should not be replaced by blacks in the same jobs, and that blacks should not be appointed as supervisors over whites (Adam and Giliomee 1979:159 and 163), but during the period under discussion the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956, the “job reservation act”, became increasingly ignored because of a shortage of labour, particularly black labour (Pretorius 2014:473).

<sup>122</sup> By 1960, twenty-two semi-state organisation existed, including ESCOM (Electricity Supply Commission), ARMSCOR (Armaments Corporations), SASOL (Die Suid-Afrikaanse Steenkool-, Olie-, en Gaskorporasie), (Adam and Giliomee 1979:164).

<sup>123</sup> In the twenty years from 1948 to 1968, the number of Afrikaners in government jobs doubled and by 1977 35 per cent of all economically active Afrikaners were in public or semi-public sectors, with

SA,<sup>124</sup> while the Afrikaner's contribution to private sector activity grew from 9,6 per cent in 1949 to 25 per cent by 1975 (Pretorius 2014:476).<sup>125</sup>

The success of the South African economy during the 1960s was described as a result of Verwoerd being "one of the ablest white leaders Africa had ever produced", and SA was described as being "in the middle of a massive boom" (*Time*, August 1966), while the *Financial Mail* called 1961 to 1966 the "Fabulous Years" for SA and drew attention to the growth of SA's economy of 30 per cent in real terms from 1961 to 1966 (Pretorius 2014:444). Verwoerd warned that the Afrikaner's growing capitalism might be used against themselves, and in 1965 he wrote to the Afrikaner Broederbond Executive Council that "the greater the prosperity and the fewer the dangers, the more difficult it would be to maintain Afrikaner unity" (Giliomee 2003:544).

The link between business and government became cemented and is illustrated by the 1977 granting of 98 per cent of the budget of the Department of Information to the publishing house Perskor, where a number of cabinet ministers, including the Minister for Information, were on the Perskor Board (Adam and Giliomee 1979:168).

By 1976, South Africa came to the end of forty years of domestic growth. SA was still a remarkably stable country, and international isolation had not yet impacted significantly on the political and economic spheres (Giliomee 2003:559).

### 3.1.3 Cultural Background

Sport as a product of culture has always been a consuming pass time for many Afrikaners with the love of participation for most children already engrained in a young age within the school system. The Afrikaans language, as another cherished part of culture, forms another cultural backdrop for the films. Both these cultural dimensions form part of the milieu within which the producers created the films.

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only 25 per cent of English-speaking South Africans employed as such (Adam and Giliomee 1979:165).

<sup>124</sup> The growth rate for 1963 was 7,4% , for 1964 stood at 7,9% but slowed down during the period 1970–1974 because of labour unrest and trade union activity, as well as the international oil crisis (Pretorius 2014:473).

<sup>125</sup> By 1975, the Executive Council of the Afrikaner Broederbond "noted with alarm that Afrikaner businessmen were no longer attaching value to nationalist ideals". It said that Afrikaner businessmen "considered economic growth and materialistic considerations a higher priority than the freedom and sovereignty of the Afrikaner people" (Giliomee 2013:544).

### 3.1.3.1 Sport

White South Africans have traditionally been sport-loving and both English and Afrikaans people have been known as enthusiastic crowds and participants in various kinds of sport.

The laws enforcing segregation included the playing field, and activism against racial segregation in sport started already during the 1950s. By the middle of the 1950s, representations by sportsmen who wished to replace segregated sport with non-racial and open sport were taken seriously. At that stage, white sporting bodies enjoyed international recognition in the fields of athletics, boxing, tennis, wrestling, weightlifting, table tennis, soccer, rugby and cricket. The all-white South African Olympic Games Association (SAOGA) was a full member of the Olympic Committee and the white South Africans teams and individuals could therefore partake in the Olympic Games as in all other international sport, although the first fundamental principle of the Olympic Charter states that “(n)o discrimination is allowed against any country or person on grounds of race, religion or political association”.<sup>126</sup> After the first victory against apartheid in sport was won in the field of tennis in 1956, the process began whereby the all-white bodies in South African sport became isolated during the next fifteen years. In 1962, the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SAN-ROC) was formed (Pretorius 2014:561), and the battle for the Olympic recognition for all South Africans passed on to SAN-ROC.<sup>127</sup> In 1970, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) took the inevitable decision to expel SA from the IOC, while by the middle of the 1970s, most white voters in South Africa had rejected mixed sport at local and club level (Giliomee 2003:565). Sport had clearly become politicised.

The D’Oliviera affair (see Chapter 5) followed, leading to isolation for the all-white South African teams from most international sporting events.<sup>128</sup> The most popular sport amongst Afrikaners has traditionally been rugby, and the specific rejection of the country’s participation became an insult and injury to the community, and especially to the Afrikaners, for whom rugby had always been a favourite sport and of national importance. By the mid-1970s, South Africa had become almost completely isolated from international sporting

<sup>126</sup> (*International Boycott of Apartheid Sport*, (<http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/international-boycott-apartheid-sport-mary-corrigall>, 22/11/2016

<sup>127</sup> Dennis Brutus was the President of SAN-ROC at the time (Pretorius 2014:561). Off the field, persons of one racial group were not allowed to enter the club buildings or use the club facilities in areas zoned for persons from another group.

<sup>128</sup> In 1969, an all-white rugby team from SA set out on a tour of the United Kingdom. This tour was immediately opposed by a well-organised campaign by the *Anti-Apartheid Movement* (AAM) and resulted in matches being played in barricaded stadiums, such as Twickenham and Swansea (Pretorius 2014:560-561). Through this “Protestor Tour”, it became clearly manifested to what great extent SA had become isolated from international sport.



events, and the white sport-loving public of SA was left with no part in the international arena of sporting competitions.

### 3.1.3.2 Afrikaans Literature

Afrikaans was one of the two official languages of South Africa since 1925 (*Die Volksblad* 9/5/2017), until the new South African constitution was promulgated in 1996.<sup>129</sup> The language has traditionally been vibrant and it developed constantly, leading to an array of publications and cultural products. It has traditionally been perceived as one of the most important grounds of Afrikaner identity.

When a leading Afrikaans academic and poet, D J Opperman, was asked by *Die Burger* to contribute to an article to the semicentennial celebrations of the Union of South Africa on 31 May 1960, on “A glance into the Future”, he wrote that the Afrikaner “had built his own world and had made himself strong, and in the process had alienated the Englishman, coloured and Bantu from him ... Afrikaans developed a strong power to repel ... we from each other, others from us”, and if Afrikaners became “less focused on themselves, less self-protective, more open to criticism, more attuned to the worlds of their fellow countrymen ... that would perhaps produce better novels, plays and magazines” (Giliomee 2003:524). The well-known Afrikaans poet and writer, Breyten Breytenbach, at a later stage referred to Afrikaners as a “tribe” (Giliomee 2003:556), encapsulated in their own enclave.<sup>130</sup>

A vibrant and vocal group of Afrikaans writers had developed during the 1960s under the moniker of the *Sestigers*, and their work opposed and questioned in many ways the *status quo* and challenged the government and Afrikaner hegemony.<sup>131</sup> The government, in an effort to exert control, formed The Publications Control Board (PBC), which became a statutory body in 1963 with the authority to ban films and books that threatened morals or security (Giliomee 2003:532).

### 3.1.4 Religion and the Afrikaans Churches

Afrikaner identity has traditionally been closely aligned to the religious beliefs and practices of Afrikaners. A troublesome history ensued, which may be traced back to the 1829 minutes of the Synod, where at this meeting, the partaking of a “bastard”, a person of mixed race, of

<sup>129</sup> According to the 1996 Constitution, South Africa thereafter currently has eleven official languages.

<sup>130</sup> An enclave can be described as a place (figuratively or literally) where a dissenting minority strives to keep a social unity within strong boundaries (Nell and Cilliers 2014: 93-108).

<sup>131</sup> *Sestigers* included *inter alia* Uys Krige, Jan Rabie, Andre P Brink, Breyten Breytenbach, Ingrid Jonker, Etienne Leroux and Dolf van Niekerk.

the Eucharist, was at stake.<sup>132</sup> During the Synod of 1857, a decision was taken that had far-reaching implications when the debate about the role and place of “people of colour” in the congregations led to a compromise, where separate buildings and/or institutions had to be set aside for their use, because of the “result of the weakness of some”.<sup>133</sup> This decision formed a rationale for the racial separation that followed within the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) community and the sister churches for the next 130 years.<sup>134</sup> The influence of Afrikaans churches in politics is further illustrated by the first recorded use of the word apartheid, which can be found in the minutes of a meeting of the DRC conference on missionary work in 1929.<sup>135</sup>

Before 1948, most of the English-speaking churches in SA had separate white and black congregations, but although they were separate, there was no legal objection to mixed services.<sup>136</sup> In the Afrikaans churches, Calvinism and nationalism played an important role and was merged as a scriptural foundation for apartheid,<sup>137</sup> with separate church services and facilities. From 1953, the Bantu Education Act had a significant impact on churches, as the Mission Schools had traditionally played an important role in black education. The act had the result that in these schools, both black and white, having been taken over by the government, the concept of “Christian National Education” was introduced. The 1953

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<sup>132</sup> The situation was dissolved by the intervention of a person, a political appointment to the Synod, who viewed the debate too humiliating for a church Synod to discuss, and the decision was simply stopped by the appointed Commissioner of Politics, who represented the government at all official church gatherings in a monitoring role with his veto right (Cilliers 2015:205).

<sup>133</sup> The decision reads: “The synod considers it desirable and according to Holy Scripture that our heathen members be accepted and initiated into our congregations wherever possible; but where this measure, as a result of the weakness of some, would stand in the way of promoting the work of Christ among the heathen people, then the congregations set up among the heathen, or still to be set up, should enjoy their Christian privileges in a separate building or institution” (Cilliers 2015:207).

<sup>134</sup> This resulted in separate buildings with separate services on a Sunday, leading to separateness, or apartheid, being accepted in the church community. In this way, the Synod decision of 1857 would later be seen as the forerunner, paving the way, for a policy of apartheid that became institutionalised after 1948 when the NP came to power.

<sup>135</sup> Ds Jan Christoffel du Plessis said: “In the fundamental idea of our missionary work and not in racial prejudice one must seek an explanation for the spirit of apartheid that has always characterized our (the DRC’s) conduct”. He rejected a mission’s policy that offered blacks “no independent national future”. Stressing the “volkseie” (the people’s own), Du Plessis envisaged the development of autonomous, self-governing black churches as a counter to English missionaries, who tried to produce converts by copying “Western civilization and religion” (Du Plessis n. d.:22-25).

<sup>136</sup> Some, such as the Anglicans and Methodists had one Conference, Assembly or Convocation that encompassed all their members. The Baptist Church was different and had a separate Assembly for whites and Convocation for blacks (Pretorius 2014:611).

<sup>137</sup> Since 1960, the scriptural foundation for apartheid as drafted by Prof J D du Toit (Totius) of the Reformed Church, was accepted. This was propagated *inter alia* by Prof A B du Preez, Dr A P Treurnicht and Dr J D Vorster. The church’s role in institutionalising apartheid became clear, even before many of the so-called apartheid laws were promulgated by Parliament. The greatest impact on the religious life in SA, however, was caused by the Population Registration Act, 1950, and the Native Laws Amendment Act, 1952, that effectively prevented whites and blacks from worshipping together (Pretorius 2014:612 and 615).



Reservation of Separate Amenities Act also resulted in mission hospitals, which were successfully run by churches, were taken over by government (Pretorius 2014:610, 616).

In 1950, a church conference was arranged by the DRC concerning the racial issue. The conference was attended by attendees from the black and Coloured churches within the DRC, as well as from the so-called “sister churches”, the *Gereformeerde* and *Hervormde* Churches. A call was issued at the conference for “total separation” and the elimination of blacks from “white industrial life” (Giliomee 2003:454).<sup>138</sup> A difference of convictions within the DRC about separation was, however, illustrated in various ways by the reaction from theologians from within the church.<sup>139</sup>

After the deadly 1960 Sharpeville events, the World Council of Churches (WCC)<sup>140</sup> initiated the Cottlesloe Consultation in December, which was attended by eight South African member churches, and resulted in the *Cottlesloe Declaration* being issued.<sup>141</sup> This declaration read *inter alia*: “We make bold to address this appeal to our churches and to all Christians calling on them to consider a spirit of equity. All racial groups have the right to make their contribution towards the enrichment of life of their country and to share in the responsibilities, rewards and privileges. The church has a duty to bear witness to both white South Africans in their uncertainty and black South Africans in their frustration” (Pretorius 2014:619).<sup>142</sup> This declaration immediately received strong opposition from some of the

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<sup>138</sup> This call was rejected by the Prime Minister at the time, Dr D F Malan, who stated that “(i)f one would attain total territorial apartheid, if it were practicable, everybody would admit that it would be an ideal state of affairs ... but that is not the policy of our party ... and it is nowhere to be found in our official declaration of policy.” He followed this with a declaration that “(t)he Afrikaans churches’ policy of total separation is not the policy of the Nationalist Party” (Giliomee 2003:484). Dr Malan himself was a theologian and former minister of the DRC.

<sup>139</sup> In 1952, Dr Ben Marais, theologian in the DRC and lecturer at the University of Pretoria, published his book *Colour. Unsolved problem of the West*, in which he concluded that there was “no honourable way we as Christians and Democrats will in the long run be able to deny them (blacks) political and other rights”. In 1956, Prof Bennie Keet, also from the University of Stellenbosch, saw apartheid as wishful thinking and as a blatant and explicit form of discrimination and ostracism, as it turned into untouchables all non-whites, offending their basic personal dignity. In April 1960, the Potchefstroom academic and theologian, Prof L J du Plessis, who also had significant influence in the AB, wrote a letter to Dr Verwoerd, who was still in hospital after the first assassination attempt on his life, asking him to accommodate blacks as “full republican citizens”. He also warned of the “deadly dangers of Verwoerdism”, but Verwoerd emerged from hospital firmly set in his ideology (Giliomee 2003:484-485, 525).

<sup>140</sup> The World Council of Churches (WCC) was formed in 1948, and SA became a member as the Synods of the Cape and Transvaal became members, as well as the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk.

<sup>141</sup> The General Secretary of the WCC, Dr W A Visser ’t Hooft acted as chairman on this occasion (Vosloo 2011:1).

<sup>142</sup> The *Cottlesloe Declaration* contained statements declaring *inter alia* all racial groups as part of the total indigenous population, that no one may be excluded from any church on the grounds of race or colour, that no scriptural ground exists to justify the prohibition of mixed marriages and that the dignity of “the adult man” [sic] included the right to property and participation in government (Vosloo 2011:2).

Afrikaans churches and from political leaders, who saw this as a challenge to the policy of apartheid.<sup>143</sup>

During 1961, the synods of both the Cape and Transvaal rejected the *Cottlesloe Declaration* and decided to resign from the WCC, thus calling into dispute the integrity of many of the Cottlesloe delegates (Vosloo 2011:2). More resignations followed, and during the General Synod of the DRC in October 1962, membership of the WCC was not even on the agenda (*Die Burger* 14/7/2016).

During 1970, the General Secretary of the WCC, Dr Eugene Carson Blake, visited SA. The financial committee of the WCC at that stage had resolved to give financial help to liberation movements fighting against white rule in SA, and the South African government was totally unprepared for this development. John Vorster thereupon called the WCC “a communist organisation” and demanded that South African churches leave the WCC while it thereafter became illegal to send any money to the WCC (Pretorius 2014:620, 622).<sup>144</sup>

By the middle of the 1970s, the Afrikaans churches still did not react as a body against the unjust political situation in SA, and in contrast hereto the 1974 General Synod of the DRC issued a report on race relations, which was accepted and which contained a confirmation and justification of the support for the policy of apartheid. This report declared itself to be concerned about social justice, human rights and self-determination, both for groups and individuals, but differed with other churches about the best means to attain this (Giliomee 2003:599).<sup>145</sup>

By the mid-1970s, the SA government was experiencing growing international sanctions against the Republic on diplomatic, military, economic and sporting terrains. In order to counter the negative image of SA, the Vorster government approved an unconventional propaganda campaign to build a positive image of SA both internally and externally (no definite figures are available). This campaign lasted about five years before the so-called

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<sup>143</sup> Dr Verwoerd declared that the churches “have in fact not yet spoken through their synods ... the voice of the church has still to be heard” (Vosloo 2011:2). Verwoerd then asked churches to distance themselves from the church leaders and the Cottlesloe resolutions (Giliomee 2003:528).

<sup>144</sup> During 1974, the National Conference of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) took place in Hammanskraal, where the Christian Institute (CI) joined the SACC in its efforts such as the *End Conscription Campaign* (Pretorius 2014:622).

<sup>145</sup> This report was criticised strongly from within Afrikaans (Jaap du Rand) and English (John de Cruichy) theologian circles, and from Allan Boesak (Afrikaans Coloured theologian) as well as from the side of the Afrikaans press, which claimed that the church had failed in its prophetic message (Giliomee 2003:559). The DRC published a booklet *Ras, Volk en Nasie* during 1974, and this publication stressed the good mission work that was done by the DRC; it said that the church had voiced its disquiet about the implications of apartheid and separate development (Pretorius 2014:623 and 624).

“Information Scandal” broke, bringing the campaign into discredit. During this campaign, the DRC had accepted some of these funds in order to counter the WCC’s role and thus itself thereby became a part of this secret government propaganda effort to protect apartheid (Giliomee 2003:583, 585).

The influential relationship between the Afrikaans churches and the government became more embedded as the churches during the 1960s became growingly outspoken in favour of the government policy.

### 3.2 External Context

By the middle of the twentieth century, the development of international communications and travel have ensured that SA, although situated on the far southern corner of Africa, would not be left in isolation on the world stage and the post-World War II world impacted on the internal policies of the Republic in a significant way.

#### 3.2.1 International Milieu

By the middle of the 1960s, South Africa was becoming isolated in a *world* where colonialism, racial domination and white supremacy were constantly questioned. Against this background, the apartheid policy, and especially the way it was implemented, was seen as a violation not only of human rights, but also of the underlying human dignity of persons. During 1961, the Secretary General of the United Nations (UN), Dag Hammarskjöld, came to SA in order to investigate charges of the violation of human rights by the South African government. During discussions, Verwoerd remained committed to the “homelands policy”, to which Hammarskjöld responded with conditions for the policy in order to be accepted as a “competitive alternative”,<sup>146</sup> but Hammarskjöld died in a plane crash a few months later and this put an end to the possibility of any further discussions. International opposition to the policies of the government grew and in 1973 the United Nations approved a resolution whereby the policies of the Republic of South Africa were condemned as a “crime against humanity” (Giliomee 2003: 531, 559, 650).<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> These included a published plan for economic development of the homelands; introducing institutions based on the will of the people that would lead to independence if the people so wished; the homelands policy to be accepted as not a complete solution; similar rights and protection as in other Western countries for those outside the homelands; and re-entitlement to South African citizenship after prolonged residency in South Africa (Giliomee 2003:531).

<sup>147</sup> According to the race classification system in South Africa, most Asians were non-white, but at times could be classified as *honorary whites*. For example, when an iron export deal to Japan was negotiated and the Japanese became honorary whites, it led to a Chinese man remarking that “(w)e are whiter than our Japanese friends ... Does this mean that the Japanese, now that they are (considered) white, cannot be associated with us without running afoul of the Immorality Act?” Honorary Whites, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honorary\\_whites](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honorary_whites), Accessed 25/9/2016.

The *Western countries*, including most of the European countries and the United States of America (USA) displayed an abhorrence of racial mixing until the 1960s.<sup>148</sup> In the South of the United States, segregation was taken for granted, with little support for desegregation or integration and “not until toward the end of the 1950’s, when apartheid had already been established in South Africa, did white South African racial views began to diverge markedly from those in Europe” (Giliomee 2013:495). It was not uncommon for Western leaders to express racist views up till the late 1950s (Giliomee 2013:496). Thereafter, resistance to apartheid grew also amongst the most Western countries (Du Plessis 1978:164).

In the *British Commonwealth of Nations* (Commonwealth), a body compiled of current and previous British colonies, South Africa was no longer welcome. When Verwoerd went to London in 1961 to resubmit South African’s application for membership, a formality as the country had recently voted to become a Republic, the application was opposed mostly by the newly independent black African states. Verwoerd withdrew the application and South Africa became a Republic outside of the Commonwealth<sup>149</sup> (Du Plessis 1978:76).

The *African continent* underwent tumultuous changes during the period from 1960 to 1976. Apart from revolutionary movements, instability and *coup d’états* in various countries, the political map of Africa changed dramatically. During these sixteen years, forty-four former colonies became independent, with seventeen in 1960 alone.<sup>150</sup> The “Winds of Change” were sweeping across the continent, and South Africa was not left unchanged. Verwoerd saw the whites in South Africa as Europeans, not as part of Africa, and he spoke of them as Europeans in Africa, but his successor Vorster had a different perspective: he tried to create an acceptance of the role and identity of whites in South Africa as being from and in Africa, declaring: “We are of Africa and to my last day in politics I will strive to have us accepted by the people of Africa.” Vorster launched his “Outward Movement” during the late 1960s, encouraging dialogue with African states (Giliomee 2003:553, 567) as an effort to integrate South Africa in the broader politics of Africa. SA had been invited to become a member at the initiation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), but this invitation was declined by Eric Louw as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Verwoerd’s Cabinet during the initial discussions, thereby closing the door to Africa (Du Plessis 1978:89-90).

In *Southern Africa*, the threats posed by neighbouring countries becoming independent on the internal racial policy of the Republic were perceived by the government as real and

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<sup>148</sup> The West did not insist on a nonracial democracy in South Africa after 1948, arguing that such a system was impossible for the time being (Giliomee 2003:495).

<sup>149</sup> This decision by Verwoerd was supported by both English and Afrikaans speakers and from then onwards Verwoerd portrayed his foreign policy in simple survival terms (Du Plessis 1978:76).

<sup>150</sup> African Independence Dates. [http://african-volunteer.net/african\\_independence.html](http://african-volunteer.net/african_independence.html). 26/11/2016

immanent threats (Du Plessis 1978:170). The traditional friendly colonial regimes were under attack by groupings and parties fighting for independence in Rhodesia, Mozambique, Angola and South West Africa (SWA),<sup>151</sup> while to the North, some of the neighbouring countries had already become independent.<sup>152</sup>

The territory of South West Africa was placed under the administration of SA by the League of Nations after World War One, and it was governed by SA as an integral part of the Union and later on of the Republic of SA. The South West African struggle for independence was driven by the South West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO) after 1964 and by their armed wing (the People's Liberation Army) since 1976. In 1974, the UN Security Council asked South Africa to transfer power to the people of Namibia by 1975, and a black government ensued (Giliomee 2003:571).

South Africa had a friendly relationship with Rhodesia after the *Unilateral Declaration of Independence* by Ian Smith during 1965, but the country was never formally recognised by SA or by any other state. By 1975-1976, it had become clear that majority rule could not be postponed indefinitely, and by 1976 the country accepted proposals by the US Secretary for State, Henry Kissinger, to introduce majority rule. By 1976, SA accepted the solution for Rhodesia (Giliomee 2003:571, 575) and began scaling back on overt support for the Smith regime, including economic assistance, and started to withdraw personnel and equipment.

The Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique were to follow on the road to independence. Angola achieved independence on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1975 through the Alvor Agreement<sup>153</sup> and the South African forces officially withdrew from Angola in 1976. On South Africa's northern border Mozambique became independent of Portugal (25<sup>th</sup> June 1975) after an armed struggle of 10 years.<sup>154</sup> By 1976, SA perceived the being surrounded by black governments opposing the Republic's internal apartheid policy as a severe threat to its sovereignty. The extent of South African military involvement in Angola (and Mozambique)

<sup>151</sup> These independent countries strongly opposed apartheid, as was illustrated by the words of Dr Kenneth Kaunda, the president of Zambia, when he said that "Africa will grow strong and the humiliation by a handful of racists will end" (*Die Burger* 26/5/1967) (Own translation).

<sup>152</sup> South Africa had traditionally been closely involved with SWA and the country's policy of apartheid was also enforced in SWA. The black population of South West Africa (SWA) therefore also had no political rights. The South African government continually spent money on buying land to add to the Bantu tribal lands in SWA in order to establish homelands in the territory (*Die Burger* 15/2/1967).

<sup>153</sup> The armed conflict already started in 1961, driven by three rival groups, namely the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (NFLA) and the National Union for the total independence of Angola (UNITA) (Giliomee 2003:571). After a *coup d'état* in Portugal, South Africa's involvement in Angola grew as an effort to support the UNITA movement in its struggle to take its rightful place in the government in accordance with the Alvor Agreement between Portugal and the three movements. The agreement could not be enforced, and the MPLA government took control as the government in an independent Angola.

<sup>154</sup> African Independence Dates. [http://african-volunteer.net/african\\_independence.html](http://african-volunteer.net/african_independence.html), Accessed 26/11/2016.

was, at the time (middle 1970s) kept secret by the government, but it was an “open secret”, as both Afrikaner and English soldiers lost their lives in the so-called “bush war”. These losses led to severe trauma within both communities (Pretorius 2014:417-420).

### 3.2.2 Sanctions

Proponents of sanctions<sup>155</sup> against SA from 1960 onwards believed that white South Africans would abandon the National Party in great numbers in economic hardship, because they believed that the Afrikaners only supported the NP because of the high standard of living that the policy ensured for them. This view did not recognise that many whites were ideological Nationalists and that they would for a long time prove to be inflexible to outside pressures (Spence 1965:63-65).

The aftermath of the 1976 Soweto riots led to a new international call for sanctions against the Republic, of which Resolution 418 by the UN Security Council in 1977 (an arms embargo) severely impacted on the military capability of South Africa (Grundy 1991:109-111).<sup>156</sup> Political isolation followed for SA, as the Republic had little contact with black African states and opinion formers during the 1960s, and as SA diplomats were not welcome in many countries because of the UN sanctions against the country (Giliomee 2003:579).

It became clear that by 1976 SA was increasingly moving into isolation and sanctions, not only in Southern Africa, but also in Africa, amongst Western countries and throughout the world at large. The new regimes in Africa, specifically in Southern Africa, were perceived as a real threat to the Republic's internal policies and independence and specifically to Afrikaner identity.

### 3.3 Afrikaner Identity

At the beginning of the twentieth century, only ten per cent of Afrikaners lived in cities and villages, but by 1960 this figure had climbed to 75 per cent (Adam and Giliomee 1979:104) because of rapid urbanisation and industrialisation.

The sense that the Afrikaner could hold on to an own nationality, a God-given right, was proclaimed by Dr D F Malan, when he had already stated in 1908: “Raise the Afrikaans language to a written language, let it become a vehicle for our culture, our history, our national ideals, and you will also raise the people who speak it ... The Afrikaans Language Movement is nothing less than an awakening of our nation to self-awareness and to the

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<sup>155</sup> Sanctions in contemporary international law are viewed as a “punitive action by one state against another, designed to force a change of policy without resorting to overt aggression” (Brewer 1989:36).

<sup>156</sup> Sanctions can take various forms, inter alia as trade sanctions, financial sanctions, political or diplomatic sanctions, military, scientific or sports sanctions.



vocation of adopting a worthy position in the world of civilization.” Historically, Afrikaans and English cultural lives in SA had developed separately, and the perceived threat that Afrikaans would be swallowed by the English culture remained alive amongst Afrikaners (Adam and Giliomee 1979:106-107). It was only ethnic collectivism and homogenous culture that, in the eyes of Afrikaner nationalists, could counter the alienation and insecurity of the post-war years.<sup>157</sup> This drive for ethnic homogeneity would become the driving force for the Afrikaners that would shape their future for years to come. This development of an own identity was driven from within a community that had suffered cultural, economic and political oppression from Britain.<sup>158</sup>

When the NP came to power in 1948, it was on the strength of their promises of restoring and promoting the Afrikaner and their identity, and the sentiment prevailed amongst business interest and Afrikaner cultural groups that they were “getting the country back” and “feeling at home in our own country”. The Afrikaner became encapsulated in their own schools and residential areas, in a quest to find and protect an own identity. By 1960, the symbols of state had become fully Afrikanerised (Adam and Giliomee 1979:115, 119-120), and although a number of organisations to protect Afrikaner cultural identity were formed before 1960, they grew in number during the years from 1960 to 1976.<sup>159</sup>

During the first half of the twentieth century, the whites justified their power to rule as that of a superior civilization, but John Vorster changed the emphasis from superior justification to that of a “historical right”, whereby history became the justification for power (Adam and Giliomee 1979:119).<sup>160</sup>

From 1960 to 1976, the Afrikaner identity had manifested in three ways: *Firstly*, the Afrikaners saw themselves as an exclusive *volk*, a nation created by God, sharing a genetic and cultural heritage with common moral values. The NP was supported as a protector of these values. Afrikaners who proclaimed different values from the prescriptions of the NP were excluded and tainted publicly as non-Afrikaners or traitors to the *volk* (examples include Beyers Naudé, B B Keet). In this way, the identity became a spiritual entity, of which

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<sup>157</sup> Afrikaner Nationalists viewed the huge gap between Afrikaner and English *per capita* income (estimated at 100:300 in 1910) as a threat to their economic and political development (Adam and Giliomee 1979:107).

<sup>158</sup> The study by Helene Opperman Lewis, 2016, *Apartheid. Britain's Bastard Child*, offers an explanation for the Afrikaner's policy towards blacks as consequence of repeated trauma caused by Britain on the Afrikaners.

<sup>159</sup> These included, *inter alia*, the Afrikaner Broederbond, the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings (FAK) and the Rapportryers.

<sup>160</sup> Support among Afrikaners for this view and policy by the NP was solidified and led to more than eighty per cent of Afrikaners supporting the NP by 1978 (Adam and Giliomee 1979:120).

the bearers were organisation such as the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings* (FAK) and the Voortrekkers (Adam and Gilomee 1979:1219).

Secondly, the political leadership role, which portrayed the Afrikaner as the core of the white South African nation, manifested and was built on the assumption that the interests and values of the Afrikaners were supreme. This view excluded the Afrikaans-speaking Coloured community, the so-called “brown Afrikaners”. This exclusion can be summed up by the view of Dr Connie Mulder (then a Cabinet Minister) that “(w)e want to survive as a white *volk*, and not as a coloured *volk*” (*Die Burger*, 13/9/1978). This political leadership role referred to and encompassed more than language and culture; it led to political control which ensured Afrikaner hegemony in order to protect Afrikaner interests at all levels (Adam and Giliomee 1979:122), and this quest to identify the “nation” became urgent. When a noted South African playwright was commissioned to do a play celebrating the first five years as Republic, it opened with the question: “What is a nation?”, questioning Afrikanerdom.<sup>161</sup> Verwoerd condemned the playwright in a scathing attack, saying that the question should not be what a nation was, but should instead celebrate the nation as creator of its own glory and destiny. Louw, the playwright, was defended by Schalk Pienaar as leading editor at the time of the Afrikaans national Sunday newspaper, *Die Beeld*, saying that Van Wyk Louw’s “only sin is that he dares to express doubt at a time in which there is fear of doubt” (Giliomee 2003:541).<sup>162</sup>

A *third* manifestation of Afrikaner identity emerged from the late 1960s onwards and included those who saw their Afrikanerdom as one of several loyalties and identifications. This was personified *inter alia* in the life and work of businessmen and was captured in the words of Dr Anton Rupert (one of the most successful Afrikaner businessmen of the period) as follows: “I am a man with a Christian conscience, child of a Christian civilization. I am Afrikaner-born. I am a South African. I belong to the Western world. I am a world citizen” (Rupert 1967:12).<sup>163</sup> Verwoerd saw the growth of Afrikaner capitalism also as a threat to the Afrikaner identity, and in 1965 he wrote to the Afrikaner Bond’s Executive Council that the greater the prosperity and the fewer the political dangers, the more difficult it would be to maintain Afrikaner unity. By 1975, the Executive Council noted with alarm that Afrikaner

<sup>161</sup> The play by NP van Wyk Louw, “Die pluimsaad waai ver” depicted the complicated character of the divisions within Afrikanerdom.

<sup>162</sup> When Van Wyk Louw passed away in 1970, his funeral was shunned by the government; not one member attended. His quest for “open talks” (“oop gesprek”), in contrast to Verwoerd’s quest for ultimate control, was in complete opposition (Giliomee 2003:541).

<sup>163</sup> The American sociologist S M Lipset remarked that at this stage the “(t)he system’s capacity to act ruthlessly against challenges was being undermined once major doubts had arisen about its propriety and morality” (Giliomee 2003:565).



businessmen were no longer attaching value to nationalist ideals. It said that Afrikaner businessmen “considered economic growth and materialistic considerations a higher priority than the freedom and sovereignty of the Afrikaner people” (Giliomee 2003:544).

By the end of 1976, only a small section of Afrikaners overtly identified with this third view of their identity, but it became a voice uttering the need for change. A small but meaningful cleavage within the Afrikanerdom had clearly manifested by 1976. At the end of 1976, the Afrikaner community became engaged in a painful process of redefining Afrikaner identity. The political ground in which such identity was previously grounded was shifting after the Soweto riots, while voices from within questioned the culture, interests and policy whereby Afrikaners had self-identified so strongly since 1948.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Political power in South Africa was cemented by the Afrikaner power elite in the hands of the nationalist Party during the years 1960 to 1976.<sup>164</sup>

Although the Afrikaners displayed a unity in all walks of life and on all fronts,<sup>165</sup> a small but deeply significant divide was opening up in Afrikaner ranks during the late 1960s. This divide was manifested in the literature of the *Sestigers* and in sections of the Afrikaans press where “verlig/verkramp” became the buzzwords in an attempt to catch the meaning of what was evolving from within this cultural community. This divide was becoming apparent during the mid-1960s,<sup>166</sup> but it was also during this period that South Africa experienced the “golden years” of economic growth, which strengthened the political power of Verwoerd and the Nationalist Party.

The Afrikaner churches seemed to have been silenced after the reaction that followed the *Cottlesloe Declaration*. Although individual voices were heard, the strong identification between church and state was solidified when Dr Koot (J D) Vorster, the brother of Prime Minister John Vorster, became the Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1970.<sup>167</sup> The

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<sup>164</sup> One of the most influential bodies at the time was the Afrikaner Broederbond (AB) which could only be joined by invitation. By 1960, it consisted of approximately 6 000 members, including the editors of most Afrikaans newspapers, most church leaders and the vice-chancellors of all the Afrikaans universities. This influence was felt everywhere, for example, when the chairman of the Afrikaner Broederbond Executive Committee (Piet Meyer) became chairman of the SABC from 1959 to 1972 (Giliomee 2003: 525-526). He was succeeded by AP Treurnicht who became the leader, from 1972-1974.

<sup>165</sup> The influence of Verwoerd was pervasive and he was perceived as powerful intellectually, as according to John Vorster, “Verwoerd was an intellectual giant. He thought for all of us” (Giliomee 2003:530).

<sup>166</sup> During 1966, Schalk Pienaar, prominent newspaper editor of *Die Beeld*, already welcomed racially mixed sport and the establishment of diplomatic relations with African countries (Giliomee 2003:550).

<sup>167</sup> Dr J D Vorster was the Actuary for the general Synod from 1962, but became the Moderator in 1970.

voice of the church opposing apartheid and injustice became quiet, while prominent conservative ministers such as Dr Andries Treurnicht became the voice of the church, completely in line with and in support of the policies of the National Party.

On the cultural front, South Africans experienced a proud moment when the world's first heart transplant was done by Dr Christiaan Barnard (Afrikaner) in Cape Town (*Die Burger* 4/12/1967), and in 1976 the country was introduced to television for the first time, opening the "enclave" to influences from "outside".<sup>168</sup>

The two circumstances that define this period, Sharpeville and Soweto, capture the change in resistance that had developed from hatred against the hated "pass laws" (1960) towards hatred against the ruling elite, thus against the Afrikaner culture (1976).

Internationally, South Africa had become a pariah nation, especially after the 1973 United Nations General Assembly declared apartheid a "crime against humanity" (Giliomee 2003:559), and the isolation of South Africa grew (diplomatically, on the sports fields, culturally and economically) until for the government it "became the norm to speak about 'perseverance' ; while an *apocalyptic mentality* developed where the 'onslaughts' were viewed as *purification*, which implied not 'guilt', but a 'test'. 'He who perseveres, will be saved'" (Cilliers 2006:73).

It became clear that the black, Coloured and Indian communities, or alternatively designated by the government as "non-white" peoples in South Africa, were living under an apartheid system whereby their human rights were severely restricted and controlled. The system impacted upon the human dignity of persons, especially by the enforcement of the so-called "petty apartheid" rules and regulations. These were obvious in everyday occurrences, such as separate entrances to private and public buildings.<sup>169</sup>

From within this complex, complicated and troubled society, three Afrikaans films were produced between 1960 and 1976 that commented on social injustices, Afrikaner identity and cultural complexity when viewed through the lens of the filmmaker; comments which were disguised at the time to the majority of the Afrikaans community by the ideological and political spirit of the time. Against this historical background, and through the lens of human dignity, this study will investigate the three Afrikaans films, *Die Kandidaat*, *Katrina* and

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<sup>168</sup> From prominent Afrikaner circles, the introduction of TV to SA was opposed vehemently. A Cabinet Minister, Dr Albert Hertzog, called television the "devil's box" (Leon 2008:23).

<sup>169</sup> Schalk Pienaar, as editor of *Die Beeld*, remarked that the policy has led to "kleinlike, aanstootlike, kranksinnige diskriminasie op grond van kleur alleen", which translates to "diminishing, offensive and demented discrimination based only on the ground of colour" (own translation) (*Rapport* 31/7/2016).

*Jannie Totsiens* through the process of cinemation,<sup>170</sup> in order to ascertain the perception brought to society by these films, the perception of society about the films, as well as the dialogue that was opened between film and society.

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<sup>170</sup> The concept “cinemation” refers to the “ability to interpret the meanings created in films by the juxtaposition of images, words, music and sound”. The definition for this new concept is offered by Timothy Cargal (Cargal 2007:2).

## Chapter 4: Die Kandidaat/The Candidate

### 4.1 Storyline

*Die Kandidaat* is a story about Afrikaner identity and the influence of Afrikaner hegemony in a political drama, with the relentless unmasking of secrets, conspiracy, human character and the abuse of power. Violations against the human dignity of persons and groups are unmasked in this drama by the dialogue, the use of art works, symbolism and actions.

The story plays out in two situations during the late 1960s in Pretoria and Johannesburg. The central venue, where about 75 per cent of the action is situated, is the impressive and formal boardroom of the Adrian Delport Foundation (Foundation), while the attention sometimes shifts to the Boys Town, a correctional facility for boys in a rural setting just outside town. The whole drama plays out over forty-eight hours.

The managing director of the Foundation has recently passed away (unknown to nearly all of the Board members, he took his own life), and the quest is to appoint a new manager to take his place. A special meeting is convened for this purpose, which seems to be a mere formality, as the applicants have been screened and a final choice had been made, only to be confirmed by the Board members.

The only condition to be met is that the person appointed must be a “ware” Afrikaner, a true Afrikaner.

The current directors around the table, who unanimously must approve the candidate, are an array of nine people from various levels of Afrikaner society, as is stipulated by the Foundation: The chairman Lourens Niemand is a previous trusted friend of the deceased founder,<sup>171</sup> and Paula Neethling, daughter of Adrian Delport, but also the widow of the previous managing director. She is a powerful woman, stylish and modern, beautiful, confident and resembles the newly successful ranks of Afrikaner professional and business women. She is painted as a relentless and scheming person, only interested in her own benefit.

The Afrikaner churches are represented by the Reverend, “Dominee” Perold, who develops into a wise and empathetic person as the story unfolds, from the heart of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). On the other hand, the Afrikaner women are portrayed by a

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<sup>171</sup> The surname Niemand means “nobody”, indicating his diffuse identity. He is shamed by the “dominee” for his lack of convictions in the words: “Our Chairman, shame on you!” His personality changes as the unmasking around the table eventually frees him from pretention, and at the end he declares himself “free, without chains”

critical, judgemental, self-righteous, intolerant and politically biased Mrs Volschenk as the leader of the women institutions in the Afrikaner churches.

The protagonist of the drama is Anton du Toit, a successful and celebrated young South African writer, winner of the prestigious Hertzog Prize for literature. His is the questioning mind of the meeting, relentlessly tearing into the values, identity, politics and double standards of those present. He is the one unmasking the secrets behind decisions taken and agendas on the table. He is himself an orphan who had been raised as an orphan, but he had been financially supported by Lourens Niemand, who had paid for his education. It is also shown by way of backflashes that he and Paula had in the past been involved in a serious love affair.

Various other board members personify the prototype Afrikaner of the 1960s. We meet Wilhelm Esterhuyse (*oom* Essie) as the carpenter; Herman Botha, the farmer; Prof Hannes van Biljon, the language activist and protector of “Die Taal”, Afrikaans; and lastly, the token civil servant, Mr H P Greeff.

The silent presence of the historical Afrikaner history is to be found in the larger than life busts of previous Afrikaner patriots, leaders and statesmen. Obviously absent is the internationally acclaimed South African statesman, the deceased Gen Jan Smuts.<sup>172</sup> Overshadowing all paintings and granite busts of these leaders is the five times larger than life figure of Adrian Delpot himself, positioned in a sitting and thoughtful position, reminding the viewer of “The Thinker” (Rodin), symbolising strength, presence and, above all, power. Clever shots by the camera keep the viewer alert of this ominous presence throughout every boardroom scene. He not only symbolises the watching eye of Afrikanerdom, but also reminds the viewer of the image of Hoggeneimer, the fictitious Jewish financial magnate created by the Afrikaner press to discredit the economic power in English and Jewish hands. The economic strength of this Foundation was built on the newly-found and hugely successful Afrikaner economic entrepreneurs; although in Niemand’s case it was built on dubious practices and products, as will be revealed during the heated arguments that followed.

The viewer is introduced to this meeting with a dramatic opening of the huge double doors to the boardroom, where the board members are seated around a table in a horseshoe position. The short introduction is formal and it is clear that everyone (excluding Anton du Toit) assumes the meeting to be short and a formality only to confirm the candidate’s appointment.

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<sup>172</sup> Many books and biographies have been written about the life of Jan Smuts. Richard Steyn offers a glimpse into this enigmatic personality in his latest work in 2015. *Jan Smuts. Unafraid of Greatness*.

The candidate, Dr Jan le Roux, is a young, successful Afrikaner who is the headmaster of Boys Town.

It quickly becomes clear that Anton du Toit has his own agenda. During the opening remarks around the table, he relentlessly and provocatively attacks the integrity of Le Roux and every board member around the table by questioning their values, morals, politics and social involvement. During this discussion the themes of Afrikaner identity, National Party policy and politics, Afrikaner economic growth, the role of the civil service and farmers, and more, are dissected. It is during this discussion as well as the follow-up on the next morning where the brutal unmasking of violations against the rights of people and groups becomes visible.

The candidate must be a “ware” Afrikaner, and that implies, according to the initial consensus around the table, that he must be white, Afrikaans, a member of the National Party, a member of one of the Afrikaans churches and committed to build up the *volk*, the Afrikaners, by his words and deeds.

It transpires shortly that, not only is the candidate engaged (to their surprise) to an English girl, but one who, to their disgust, belongs to the Roman Catholic faith. These announcements cause havoc in their midst. Paula, who it is shown to have an affair with Le Roux, was unaware of his engagement, and Paula is visibly shaken by the news. The “scandal” of being betrothed to the English “enemy” of not so long ago (for some still the enemy) is met with negativity and even disgust by most of those around the table.

In a further revelation, it turns out that Le Roux himself as a teenager has been an inmate in Boys Town, for his wrong deeds as a teenager.

The relentless questioning by Anton uncovers dubious circumstances in the lives of the members. Arguments follow and accusations fly around the table. An *impasse* is reached and the meeting adjourns with the request that Jackie, Le Roux’s fiancée, should present herself the next morning for an interview. Le Roux departs this first session shaken and uncertain, and clearly not anymore a certain appointee.

Action now moves to Boys Town, where a confrontation amongst the boys is taking place. The protagonist here is an obviously evil big boy with a criminal record, Isak, implicating the young Kallie in wrongdoing. Present at this is Chrisjan, a typical Afrikaans “oom”, a middle-aged and kindly man, as an overseer of the boys, who turns out to be a calming influence on the boys and the person who personifies reason, empathy and the presence of the *Other* in this film. He brings hope and serenity to the young lives of the boys.

This confrontation leads to a fight, where in an unfortunate accident Kallie hits Isak in self-defence with a chain, resulting in serious injury to Isak and a race to the hospital. Kallie runs off into the night.

This unfortunate development transpires in the absence of Le Roux, who was requested by Chrisjan not to leave the school ground that night, as Chrisjan sensed trouble was brewing. Le Roux, however, answered a summons by Paula for an illicit meeting at her place, with her intention to persuade him to break off his engagement with Jackie. Before these arguments are resolved, Chrisjan budes into Paula's home with the upsetting news of the night's disaster at Boys Town. Le Roux leaves for the hospital with Paula in a distressed and dangerous mood.

In another earlier setting, Anton (and Paula) turned out to have been guests that same evening at an art exhibition, where the discussions at the party illuminate the important role that art and literature has been growing into as part of Afrikaner culture. The role of the *Sestigers* is under the loop as well. This function seems to be attended by the all persons of cultural importance in the Afrikaner society in Pretoria at the time.

After Le Roux has left her house later that night, Paula summons Anton to her house. Her power and influence over the board members are clearly illustrated by her actions and the way in which she manipulates people. She confronts Anton with the ultimatum that Le Roux must be appointed without his fiancée, or "together they will be out". She also threatens to disclose information which only she as the daughter of the founder and widow of the previous managing director has. She is seen as wielding real power, as always getting her way and as an extremely dangerous opponent to cross. The argument ends unresolved, with Anton clearly now her opponent.

The stage is set once again in the boardroom on the next morning. Jackie is apprehensive, scared and introduced into these formidable surroundings while her fiancée is asked to leave the room.

Discussions are initially friendly as questions are put to Jackie in Afrikaans, and she replies to the best of her ability also in Afrikaans. Paula, with her own agenda, with perfect demeanour and sophistication, quickly escalates the interview to a level where her antagonism becomes clear, although every word is clothed in farcical pretence of politeness. Jackie's home language, schooling and college in Natal (the remnant of the British presence in SA), her Roman Catholic faith and her overall insufficient capabilities all come under attack. Paula emotionally demolishes Jackie in a very short time.

Not all the board members accept these attacks by Paula, and lively arguments follow about the role of the church, the Afrikaans/English relationships and language politics, labour relations, women in society, and more. The "dominee" is the only one who at this stage comes to Jackie's aid as the compassionate voice with his empathetic and conciliatory remarks.

Jackie leaves the meeting in tears and informs Le Roux of her decision to break off the engagement and to leave Boys Town in order for him to join the Foundation, as this will fulfil his lifelong ambition.

In an interlude, the viewer is taken to the hospital where a critically injured Isak nods his head in forgiveness to Kallie.

Back in the boardroom, the discussions and arguments have become more and more heated and personal. Topics range from the silence of the church, censorship by the government, the influence of the newly contentious *Sestigers*, while Anton keeps count sarcastically of how the favour moves towards the appointment of Le Roux and relentlessly attacks the certainties of those around the table. Accusations against the character of the founder, Adrian Delport, are levelled, on account of his fortune that had been made from dubious sources. The atmosphere becomes dangerous and toxic.

Paula threatens the chairman, Lourens Niemand, with uncovering the “truth” when it becomes clear that in this instance she will not achieve her goal. She then deviously escalates the boardroom conflict by asking the secretary to admit the woman from the waiting room. It is clear that her calculating mind has planned this revelation and that she intends to use her power and knowledge in breaking down the lives of those who oppose her in any way.

In the catharsis that follows, it transpires that Niemand is the father of Anton du Toit, the mother being the lady admitted into the meeting. She turns out to have been a lady from his past, possibly a coloured servant or a white lady of uncertain background, but of lower social standing. Sonja greets Niemand with dignity “after all these years”, and Niemand graciously introduces her to Anton as “your mother”. The impact on all is clear and Du Toit, although looking at her, does not acknowledge her, and does not address her directly. She is a quiet and serene presence and is excused from the meeting by the chairman after the introduction.

All has now been revealed. Anton is the bastard son of Niemand and Sonja, the reason why he had been raised by Niemand. Paula has played her devious hand, but she still does not achieve her objective, as Le Roux is appointed forthwith with a unanimous decision. (The “Taalbul”, Prof Van Biljon, had been the only opposing voice remaining, but had offered his resignation in order not to tear the Board apart). Almost every person in the room has been scarred by these confrontations of the last two days. Certainties have been challenged, skeletons have been taken from the cupboard, pain has been inflicted and personal agendas have been unmasked.



In another interlude, while Le Roux has been waiting in the waiting room since the start of the morning's procedures, a severely distraught Kallie arrives with the terrible news that Isak had died in the hospital. He emotionally appeals to Le Roux not to leave them, but rather to help them.

Invited back inside, Le Roux is then gratuitously offered the position of Managing Director of the Adrian Delport Foundation. That implies that he has passed the test of being a "ware Afrikaner". Le Roux then, as graciously, turns the offer down, voicing his decision to instead remain at Boys Town where he can be useful amongst the Afrikaner youth, and where he felt more needed.

The film ends with powerful images of brokenness while the icons of Afrikaner identity still keep their watch in the boardroom.

## **4.2 Themes from *Die Kandidaat***

The filmmaker uses the story to reflect the society in which it is placed with relevant dialogue that relates to daily real-life occurrences and issues. The protagonist, Anton du Toit, drives the dialogue throughout and he states at the very beginning that "somebody should talk in this madhouse, before you'll be telling us that we are blind and cannot see anything".

### **4.2.1 Afrikaner Identity**

The focus of this film is on the identity of the Afrikaner and how this identity perception influences society. From the opening of the discussions around the boardroom table, it is clear that the candidate to be interviewed must adhere to the perception of the board members of what constitutes a "ware Afrikaner", a real Afrikaner. This illusive identity, "Afrikanerskap", had been influenced during this period by a number of factors and developments, including the development of the Afrikaans language and literature, a political rift that was opening up amongst Afrikaners, the role and place of the Coloured population and the growing economic strength of Afrikaners, as well as the role of religion. The producer skilfully applies the lens of human dignity in unmasking the actions and words in the everyday lives of those portrayed, as well as in broader society. The issues reflecting the search for and the protection of the Afrikaner identity includes as essence the Afrikaans language and literature, the "verlig/verkramp" divide, colour as identifier and newly-found economic strength.

#### 4.2.1.1 Language

During the first half of the twentieth century, the popular debate developed amongst Afrikaners on the issue of Afrikanerdom. The fold was being moulded and people stepping outside the general majority's view were ostracised.<sup>173</sup> The attempt to establish Afrikaans as a public language had succeeded to a remarkable degree and by 1970 Afrikaans, as the language of the National Party, was already well established. The education system was divided in separate schools and universities for Afrikaans and English speakers (as well across racial lines into white and non-white schools, colleges and universities.)<sup>174</sup> The language of the National Party was, however, not viewed positively by all, and already in 1964 Jakes Gerwel, a non-white professor of Afrikaans, remarked that Afrikaans had an "arrogance and cruelty" and during the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, Afrikaans had become identified amongst blacks as the language of the oppressor (Giliomee 2003:546, 550).

The importance of language as an indication of identity to the Afrikaners becomes clear around the table in the boardroom discussions, with language as a central focus of identity and central to the quest of appointing a "ware" Afrikaner ("true" Afrikaner). Keen observations throughout the film highlight the Afrikaner's view that the real enemy is in fact the English speakers. During an argument between Anton and the professor of Afrikaans, Anton enquires from him against whom the fight will be for which the professor declares himself ready. The answer seems to be "them", and "they" are the English South Africans, personified in the film by Jackie. The threat has thus been admitted into their midst and must now be stopped.

Mrs Volschenk advocates the view that the Afrikaner must stay pure, with no mingling with the English speakers. When the civil servant board member reluctantly admits that his wife is an English speaker, he also becomes an outcast, and is accused of admitting the "snake in our midst".

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<sup>173</sup> Gen Jan Smuts, although a statesman of huge international standing, was being viewed with suspicion amongst the followers and supporters of the National Party, because he belonged to the Suid-Afrikaanse Party (SAP) and was seen as a traitor to the Afrikaans cause, which cause was associated with the National Party by the majority of Afrikaners (Steyn 2015:100-168).

<sup>174</sup> Outside of Europe, "only Hindi and Indonesian, which relied on a great number of speakers, as Hebrew, matched the achievement of Afrikaans in becoming employed in Parliament, the Civil Service, science and technology and as the sole medium in both undergraduate and post-graduate teaching" (Giliomee 2003:545). As a science language, it was extended in the 1970's to natural sciences and medicine – being cited number 32 in articles indexed by *Chemical Abstracts* (higher than Hindi, Armenien and Arabic) and 25<sup>th</sup> in *Index Medicus* (Giliomee 2003:546).

When the farmer informs the meeting that he has “two little kaffertjies”<sup>175</sup> on his farm who speak Afrikaans, he argues that that does not change them into Afrikaners. The complicated concept of identity remains elusive and the debate rages on without answers.

#### 4.2.1.2 Sestigers

The *Sestigers* was a group of young, dissident Afrikaans writers who embraced secularisation, modernity, racial tolerance and sexual freedom, and their books and publications helped to change and free the imagination of the Afrikaans reading public in profound ways. Their work was politically engaged, with many of their novels, poems and plays focussing on the subject of apartheid and race relations. They also rallied against the censorship of works that were sexually explicit or fell outside the Afrikaans Christian purism (Giliomee 2003:554-555).

Their aim was in the first place to reclaim a language and a people from what they saw as an oppressive and monolithic system. The name *Sestiger* was derived from an experimental journal, named *Sestigers*, which was short-lived (1963-1965), but which gave expression to dramatic changes in Afrikaans literature. First and foremost, they wanted Afrikaans to be engaged with literary movements in the rest of the world,<sup>176</sup> but although these writers were strongly associated with the political struggle, some of them, notably Bartho Smit, remained strong supporters of the NP. In response to their disagreement (with Bartho Smit) on the role of Afrikaans, André Brink wrote: “If I speak of my people then I mean: every person, black, coloured or white, who shares my country and my loyalty towards my country. This is the essence of my argument that our whole country must be written open and that writers should start taking account of what ‘our whole country’ really is.”<sup>177</sup> The *Sestigers* were viewed as symbolising the more liberal, the “verligte” view of Afrikanerdom<sup>178</sup> and this inclusive view of the “people” conflicted with the exclusive view of Afrikanerdom around the boardroom table. The protagonist of this film, Anton du Toit, portrays a *Sestiger* writer of standing amongst the cultural elite in the Afrikaans community, as he was awarded with the most prestigious award in literature by the *Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns* (Akademie), the Hertzog prize. His views are provocative, those of a person committed to thinking for himself. He opens up the discussions around the table and constantly leads the arguments back to

<sup>175</sup> The term “kaffertjie” in this context was used as an endearing term. The word “kaffer” however, was used for Africans by some South Africans in a demeaning context.

<sup>176</sup> Their “Manifesto” stressed freedom, responsibility, honesty, joy in creation and the breaking down of falseness.

<sup>177</sup> An Introduction to the Sestigers <https://diesestigers.wordpress.com/about/> 22/11/2016.

<sup>178</sup> The Publications Control Board became a statutory body in 1963, with the authority to ban films and books that threatened morals or security (Giliomee 2003:532), possibly as a counter to the newly-found voices in literature and other forms of expression.

the essential question about Afrikaner identity. In doing so, he unmasks the prejudices of those present.<sup>179</sup>

The film is filled with images of anticipation of a new vision for those present: a new vision of tolerance, truth, and acceptance and with freedom of thought and speech; a vision where the humanity of all may manifest in the acceptance of the human dignity of all people. This is the same vision which is moulded into the form of the *Sestigers*, the new voice in Afrikaner circles, bringing this hope. Of those present, it is only Dominee (Ds) Perold, who, from the start, presents himself as willing to listen to Anton, and through his words and actions resembles the voice of hope and anticipation. The portrayal of this view by Ds Perold serves to highlight the split in perspectives on human dignity and the potential that was also present in the Afrikaans church community. The most prevalent view from the DRC at the time was reiterated by Dr J D Vorster in his capacity as chairman of the *Council against Terrorism*, who was of the conviction that the focus of the *Sestigers* was on sex. "They dish up a lot of filth for us, thereby preparing the way for communism, because all moral values of a *volk* are thereby broken down," (*Die Burger* 16/5/1967, own translation). Literature as an art form was also questioned by the church, and a decision by the General Synod of the DRC read that the Synod noted with significant alarm "the new direction in Afrikaans literature that praises immoral descriptions, unchristianlike views and existential philosophy as art" (*Die Burger* 21/10/1966, own translation).<sup>180</sup>

Mrs Volschenk, portrayed as the archetype conservative Afrikaans "volksmoeder" ("mother of the nation"), claims that all books by the *Sestigers* should be burnt, as they contain only messy stories of sex, "rubbing dirt off" on each reader. She also refers to the arguments around the table as "muddy and messy".

Anton is constantly being silenced and degraded by Prof Van Biljon as "volksvreemd" ("alien to the nation"), a traitor to the Afrikaners and their interest.<sup>181</sup> Although he was awarded the prestigious Hertzog Prize by fellow Afrikaners, the chairman derides him with the words: "I believed in you, but you became a nightmare."

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<sup>179</sup> The Afrikaner elite still formed the centre of the Afrikaner Broederbond and influenced decisions in business, the academic world and throughout the professional community (Giliomee 2003:580). It seemed as though this entrenchment could last for a very long time. Anton is the person present who observes that the Afrikaner is placed in "narrow little boxes of belief, school, politics, language; all prescribing who to be and what to do." This, of course, is contrasted with the open and challenging style and perceptions of the *Sestigers*.

<sup>180</sup> In an article in *Die Kerkbode*, a scathing attack was launched on a book by the *Sestiger*, Etienne Leroux. His work was described as "not true art", abusing God's creation and truth (*Die Burger* 11/3/1967).

<sup>181</sup> Anton countered sarcastically that Afrikaners will only "be accepted if they all belong to the same school, church, language and politics ...neatly stacked into little holes."

The *Sestigers* as a theme is offered in the film in order to unmask the prejudices and perspectives that were prevalent in Afrikaans circles at the time. Many of the literary works by the *Sestigers* challenged the policy of apartheid as abusive, hurtful and destructive to the human dignity of people.

#### 4.2.1.3 “Verlig/Verkramp”

In 1967, an Afrikaans-speaking academic at the University of Potchefstroom coined the concepts “verlig” and “verkramp” as metaphors for the growing tensions between the liberal (“verlig”) and conservative (“verkramp”) groupings in Afrikaner ranks. Although both sides, “verlig” and “verkramp”, subscribed to white rule, the view from the “verlig” side, voiced by Pienaar, the editor at the time of *Die Beeld*, a national Afrikaans Sunday newspaper, was of opinion that apartheid did not offer a license to act in a way that is harmful or hurtful to the dignity of people of a different colour (Giliomee 2003:550).

The divergence in political views amongst Afrikaners was becoming clear in the differences expressed between the Afrikaans press in the South (Cape Town) and the North (Pretoria and Johannesburg). The “liberal” Nasionale Pers was the publisher of both *Die Burger* (South) and *Die Beeld* (North), while views by the more conservative Die Republikeinse Pers were expressed in *Dagbreek*, *Hoofstad* and *Die Vaderland* (North).

The arguments around the boardroom table reflect both streams of thought. Although it seems at the start as though a unanimous perception of Afrikanerdom exists, the differences are cut open with precision by Anton. The meeting eventually swings towards the more enlightened view of Afrikanerdom, but during this process the rigid views by Prof Van Biljon, the professor of Afrikaans (revered as “Die Taal”), forces him to resign from the board.

Anton, in a scene where he speaks in front of a huge bust of Verwoerd, asks the question whether the truth should not always be of the most importance. But the question is then raised: Whose truth? Verwoerd’s belief in the absolute truth of his answer to the racial situation of South Africa is contrasted by this image of Anton being an enquiring mind and free spirit, although also at the same time, being an Afrikaner. It seems as though the tension within the mould now becomes stretched. Anton hereby also unmask the tension developing in the Afrikaans press, manifesting in the growing divide between “verlig” and “verkramp”.

The role of “petty” apartheid is personified by oom Essie, the board member appointed on account of him being “die gewone man” (“the man in the street”), when he agrees with the “dominee” that the Afrikaner should extend a hand to the blacks, “but not to shake it”. This observation reflects circumstances occurring in the community that were also reported in the press. When a black homelands leader, Chief Buthelezi, danced with a white woman at a

press ball the “incident” was investigated and called a “wrong” development; he was “repelled” by a cabinet minister (Giliomee 2003:554). Such incidents were growingly remarked upon in different ways by diverging proponents from both sides, “verlig” and “verkramp”.

#### 4.2.1.4 Colour

Sonja is introduced to the meeting at the end of the film, during the final discussions around the boardroom, by Paula in a malicious way when seeking revenge against Anton. She is introduced as Anton’s mother, his father being Lourens Niemand. Anton is clearly the product of a past illicit relationship, and this has been kept as a secret from everybody.

Sonja is a lady of uncertain race. She might have been classified as a Coloured person, and could previously have been a maid in the Niemand household, or she could also have been a white lady of lower social standing than the Niemands and most of those present, but she is clearly Afrikaans-speaking. No further light is shed on her background, and the producer hereby leads the viewer into the uncertainty about her identity.

Is she a white or a Coloured person? Is she an Afrikaner? May a Coloured person be an “Afrikaner”? These questions are put to the audience by Sonja’s introduction.<sup>182</sup>

The view of the government is constantly proclaimed and defended at the meeting by the civil servant, who declares about the Coloured population that “(t)hey are officially acknowledged as a group on their own and should develop their culture accordingly,” herein supported by Prof Van Biljon: “We give to everybody their right of existence, including to the Coloured.” These views about other groups in the country are hereby supported, but reflect and unmask the patronising perceptions as articulated in government policy.

#### 4.2.1.5 Growing Afrikaner Economic Strength

A remark by the well-known economist from the University of Stellenbosch, Prof Jan Sadie, highlighted a new phenomenon that had surfaced as the “Afrikaner Hoggensheimers”, referring to the epithet for unscrupulous English-speaking businessmen only interested in profits, but here applied to Afrikaners.<sup>183</sup> These newly established economically strong Afrikaners were, however, cautioned by the Broederbond Executive Council not to “consider economic growth and materialist considerations a higher priority than the freedom and sovereignty of the Afrikaner people” (Giliomee 2003:544).<sup>184</sup>

<sup>182</sup> The theme of Coloured identity is further explored by the producer in *Katrina*.

<sup>183</sup> Sadie J, 1974. Die ekonomiese faktor in die Afrikaner-gemeenskap, in Van der Merwe (ed) 1974, *Identiteit en verandering*. Kaapstad: Tafelberg:84-101. In Giliomee 2003:544.

<sup>184</sup> By 1960, the total income of whites was 70% of the total income, although they formed only 19% of the population. This figure changed to 63% in 1976, as a result of redistribution of financial resources

The rise in Afrikaner capital from 1948 onwards can be ascribed to various factors, *inter alia* to the rapid economic growth, abundant cheap labour provided to both English and Afrikaners as a result of government controls,<sup>185</sup> the increasing impact of the successful growth in agriculture (mostly in Afrikaner hands), which resulted in money flowing to Afrikaner businesses and banks, and lastly also because of the vastly improved facilities for education in Afrikaans, such as universities, secondary, technical and vocational schools (Adam and Giliomee 1979:168).<sup>186</sup> These newly-found Afrikaner economic successes are portrayed in the film by the Adrian Delpont Foundation as well as by the economic position of some of the board members. The Foundation was formed by Mr Delpont at the end of his life as a penitential act, because his fortune seems to have been made in dubious ways (in the fields of tobacco and liquor) and he felt the need to “right some wrongs”. His daughter personifies the newly rich, but also the sophisticated and emancipated Afrikaans woman of that period. She is empowered financially, speaks independently and flaunts her money. She embodies the development of the perception that the newly attained economic strength of the Afrikaners will or may lead to direct power and influence.

#### 4.2.2 National Party Politics

During 1954 the Tomlinson Report<sup>187</sup> was presented to the government. This was a study commissioned by the SA government (Dr Malan as PM) to look into the economic viability of the “reserves” (later called “Bantustans”) into which the government intended to confine the black population (Giliomee 2003:484, 515-519, 561). When the report was tabled, Dr Verwoerd as Minister of Native Affairs) strongly criticised the recommendations of the report, while the ANC also strongly opposed the assumption of racial segregation. The report was not accepted, but by the beginning of the 1960s, the “non-white” population of South Africa was restricted as to free movement, and while living areas were demarcated, they had no political rights in government and were prohibited from intimate relationships across the

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amongst the whole population (Adam and Giliomee 1979:175). Afrikaners’ aggregate share of the economy, including agriculture, rose from 10% to 21% between 1948 and 1975 (Giliomee 2003:543).

<sup>185</sup> The dependence on state for labour decreased after the mid-1970s as mechanisation and specialisation started to impact on farming methods, and as labour relations on farms became a security matter (Adam and Giliomee 1979:184-185).

<sup>186</sup> In 1942, the *Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut* (an organisation to protect and enhance Afrikaners in the private sector) was founded and entrepreneurs followed by founding, *inter alia*, Sanlam, Santam, Federale Volksbeleggings, Federale Mynbou, Volkswaard (1934), Trustbank (1956), Altron (1965), Bonuskor, Helpmekaar Studiefonds and more, which were built up as well-known and successful private entities (Pretorius 2014: 461-472, Giliomee 2003: 543, Adam and Giliomee 1979:169).

<sup>187</sup> The report was set up as “a comprehensive scheme for the rehabilitation of the Native Areas with a view to developing within them a social structure in keeping with the culture of the Native and based upon effective socio-economic planning”, (*Tomlinson Report*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomlinson\\_Report/South\\_Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomlinson_Report/South_Africa)), Accessed 23/9/2016), (see also Giliomee 2003:466, 484, 515-519, 561).



colour lines that were drawn by the Population Registration Act. Some of the restrictive laws (including, *inter alia*, the Mixed Marriages Act, the Group Areas Act, the Immorality Act and the “job reservation act”) impacted more heavily on the Coloured population, as they were never intended to be moved into autonomous areas or independent homelands as was planned for the different black population groups. They lived mostly as Afrikaans speakers in close proximity to the white Afrikaners.

Around the boardroom table, the discussion swings from the position of Coloured and black people to conditions on the farms, and in a speech by the civil servant, it becomes clear that he thinks “too much is being done for the blacks; everything today is about the blacks.” He is, however, also the person who is faithful to his government, voices the political rhetoric of the ruling party, emphasising his belief that one day “the Bantu people will have their own homelands where they develop their own lives, own culture”.<sup>188</sup> The view around the table is that “it is every Christian’s duty to believe in apartheid”. In the same vein, the “influx of immigrants” is described as a threat, as they, of course, will not become Afrikaners.

The debate around the boardroom table ignites around the racial policy issue of apartheid. In heated arguments, the closely related links between government and the National Party are highlighted, underlined and unmasked. While the danger of this close political relationship becomes clear, the impact of such intertwined interests would only burst onto the political landscape during the middle of the 1970s in the form of the “Information Scandal”, where it was revealed how the government had taken part in providing the finances for creating “new avenues, instruments, organisation and people that could speak on behalf of South Africa” and where it was declared by the Minister of Information that “(i)f we are attacked, no rules apply if we come to the question of our existence. We will use all means at our disposal, whatever they may be,” (*International Herald Tribune*, 17/2/1977).<sup>189</sup> When, during the discussion, the civil servant offers a veiled threat to “check-up” on the candidate, this role in secret information gathering by the state is touched upon.

The social circumstances created by the apartheid laws and the impact on the dignity of the people come under discussion around the table. Arguments defending the government’s policy by the civil servant, Professor Van Biljon and Mrs Volschenk are constantly countered and questioned by Anton. The “dominee” is the one person offering a redemptive view.

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<sup>188</sup> Under the apartheid government, blacks became foreigners in their own country. They could not freely own land, as only 13% of land was so designated (Giliomee 2003:512). Separate spaces for blacks were created including such “strange” facilities as the Manyeleti Nature Reserve for “Bantu” only (*Die Burger* 27/5/1967).

<sup>189</sup> Discussion of this situation in Giliomee 2003:582.



The NP policy is strongly supported and defended by the civil servant, who offers the information that sixty per cent of the country's population is Afrikaans, but it seems that Coloured people were not included in the census, because "they are a group on their own".

Throughout the film, images of black and white are present, in the floor tiles and pictures, implicating the initial right-or-wrong view of those present and the black-and-white terms of reference during the debate. "No questions should be asked", in the words of Mrs Volschenk, who views herself as a "true" Christian and proposes that the government is always right.<sup>190</sup> The chairman does concede at one point that a true Christian and Afrikaner may well belong to another political party, but no concession is ever made concerning the possibility of belonging to a church outside of the traditional three Afrikaans "sister" churches. Anton warns the meeting that while the voice of the church remains silent, "we sleep with our eyes open".

The political support for the NP views is clearly reflected in the political dispersal of the time as reflected in the institutions. By 1974, Afrikaners accounted for eighty per cent of the senior staff of government departments (Posel 1999:103).

In one of the last scenes, Anton is threateningly surrounded by the circle of granite busts from the Afrikaner's past. The watchful eye from the huge granite bust of the deceased founder, as towering and inescapable presence, keeps a threatening watch throughout. The message is clear: to keep the Foundation pure, the "true" Afrikaner should not move outside the fold of the perception of "ware" Afrikaners that is offered, protected and watched over by the meeting and which is a faithful echo of the NP policy.

#### **4.2.3 Role of the Afrikaans Churches**

During the film, a voice of reason and redemption is offered in the person of Dominee Perold. He is a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, and he voices concerns he has with the arguments made by some of the board members, as well as with the claims about National Party policy. Ds Perold is the voice of reason in the film, also the voice of redemption. He perceives a Christian's role as help to others, including "the blacks" and he reminds the meeting of the role of the church in pointing people towards the light, to the role of Afrikaners in the history of South Africa. He is also the voice that recognises that millions of other Christians in the world do not support apartheid and are not Afrikaners.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> The chairman silences Anton more than once by telling him not to "ask questions", but Anton's reply is that he may talk, as he is "the only free person present, the only one who has not sold out his freedom".

<sup>191</sup> More than eighty per cent of Afrikaners were regarded as "very religious", while no fundamental criticism against apartheid was offered by the churches (Giliomee 2003:580).

Anton unmasks the silence of the church by the words: “(E)verybody around you lies and cheats, while the voice of the church is not heard”. This is a loud accusation against the voice of the church that had become silent during the 1960s.

In December 1960, the Cottlesloe Consultation took place at the initiative of the WCC and that resulted in the *Cottlesloe Declaration*. The Afrikaans newspapers were mostly critical of the declaration, with the exception of *Die Burger*, embodying the more “verligte” political view. On 19<sup>th</sup> December 1960, this newspaper declared its sympathy with the decisions that were taken, stating that the church represents a higher authority than the rulers of this world and therefore has the right and responsibility to test prevailing policy (Vosloo 2011:5), reflecting also a moral argument (see Chapter 3 for more discussion).

An Afrikaans theologian, Dr Beyers Naudé, one of the delegates of the Transvaal Synod, responded within days after the Consultation to allegations against the Cottlesloe delegates in the press. “It is abundantly clear that the findings of the deliberations are going to have far-reaching results for church and state.”<sup>192</sup> On 28<sup>th</sup> December 1960, *Die Kerkbode* (official mouthpiece of the DRC), with Dr A P Treurnicht as editor, warned that some church leaders ought to speak in a lower prophetic tone. It also warned the church not to use political formulas (Vosloo 2011:7). These actions can be interpreted as efforts to silence opposing or questioning views.

Protest meetings were held against the *Cottlesloe Declaration* in Pretoria and Dr J D Vorster of the DRC became one of the most severe critics of this declaration, later describing it “as the sharpest attack by the liberalistic element to destroy Afrikaner politics” (Langer 2004:114). The protests against Cottlesloe grew from within the Afrikaans churches and appeals to withdraw from the WCC followed. In March 1961, a proposal was accepted at the meeting of the Federal Council of Dutch Reformed Churches to resign as a member of the WCC (Vosloo 2011:9, 10).<sup>193</sup> The opposing views from within the DRC were effectively silenced for the next decade.

Already in 1961, Beyers Naudé articulated the hegemony he saw in the Afrikaans community as a threat to the church: “What strikes me, is that the general approach of the man on the street (“gewone man”) is derived not from the perspective of Christianity, but from (the perspective) of the future of white people (“blankedom”), not so much to determine

<sup>192</sup> Naudé further saw Cottlesloe as a crossroads for the Afrikaner churches, reiterating that “the coming months are going to demand study and meditation of every minister of the Gospel as has perhaps never before been asked in our lifetime” (*Dagbreek en Sondagnuus* 18/12/1960, in Vosloo 2011:6).

<sup>193</sup> In 1963, Beyers Naudé resigned as minister of the Aasvoëlkop DRC congregation. He, as former Moderator of the Southern Transvaal Synod of the DRC, plus some English-speaking delegates at Cottlesloe, formed the Christian Institute (CI), with the aim to provide a theologically grounded platform against apartheid.

the prophetic calling of the church, but to determine the political calling of the *volk* (Naudé 1961, translated from an unpublished speech on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1961). He emphasized that the churches have to take seriously the issues, *inter alia*, of joint membership and mixed marriages. He further warned that the DRC was placing itself on a path towards ecumenical isolation and that the church will not be able to perform its prophetic function because of the influence of “hidden powers”. These issues have in hindsight become known as the “Ghost of Cottlesloe” (Vosloo 2011:12-13).

Protest meetings were also held against the *Declaration*,<sup>194</sup> while positive reaction about the *Declaration* came from individuals within the DRC.<sup>195</sup> Sermons from within the DRC at the time reflect the support by the church for government policy<sup>196</sup> and the resulting silence by the Afrikaans churches against injustices following the *Cottlesloe Declaration* is the reason for Anton’s accusation that “the voice of the church” has been silent, but that “I will not be silenced”.

#### 4.2.4 Afrikaans/English Relationship

The support of white English-speaking South Africans was instrumental in the resulting “yes” vote in favour of becoming a republic during 1960. It seems as though a new bond of cooperation between Afrikaans and English people could have been formed, as illustrated in the words of Verwoerd at the time that “(t)he English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking sections have become like a new bride and bridegroom who enter upon a new life in love, to create together and to live together as life-mates” (Giliomee 2003:525).

The film unmasks the superficiality of this “bond”. The Afrikaners had traditionally viewed the English (as having been the historical foe from Britain) as the enemy, and the film portrays that this had not changed during the 1960s. Jackie, as an English-speaking South African, is seen as the enemy, and the decision to be taken about Jan’s appointment becomes centred around Jackie’s “Englishness”. It becomes a fight driven by Paula to protect the institution

<sup>194</sup> The “Afrikaner Kring” (an Afrikaans cultural organisation) also organised a protest meeting in Pretoria, where a motion was accepted which stated “unwavering trust in the church of the Afrikaner” and that they will reject the *Declaration* and maintain the policy of apartheid; a policy that was not viewed as contrary to the Word of God (Vosloo 2011:8).

<sup>195</sup> Strong reaction about this criticism of the *Declaration* was captured in a book titled *Vertraagde aksie*, by noted theologians of the time. These included Professors A S Geyer, B J Marais, and B B Keet. Amongst other statements, a call was issued hereby that the churches should give notice to the government that they can no longer accept the policy of apartheid (Vosloo 2011:7). This book was severely criticised from within the church (Langer 2004:114 in Vosloo 2011:8).

<sup>196</sup> “Times in the life of a church come when it must blow the trumpet without fear – or has to follow the more difficult path to its own downfall. In such times, the church must ask itself anew, in the light of the Word of God, where it is heading. And if it chooses the way of being faithful to its calling and to Scripture, then it must prepare itself for the most aggressive resistance. In this struggle there will be journalists who will dip their pens in poison; trusting members who will be misled; as well as misunderstandings and quarrels, casting of suspicion and malignance” (Cilliers 2006:28). The sermon comes from a collection of sermons from the DRC during the years of apartheid.

against English influence, aggravated by her being a Roman Catholic. The fight becomes a desperate attempt to exclude her. It is stated that “together with her, Jan will be out. Alone he will be in, as Jackie ... does not fit into our organisation.”

Jan le Roux, being associated with Jackie, who is a Roman Catholic, has now become tainted. On a question to her whether she would relinquish her beliefs as a RC and convert to the DRC church, Jackie declines: “It’s not going to work. I’m a Roman Catholic. I’m English. I’m not good enough.”

The Afrikaner meeting has now virtually closed ranks on her as an outsider, save for Anton. The professor sees only doom ahead, a creeping infiltration of “them” against “us”, citing “the English, Anglicans, Jews, Catholics, and more.” All English-speaking immigrants are painted as a threat, as according to Mrs Volschenk: “ONS is die room van hierdie land!” (“WE are the cream of this country”).

When Jackie makes her decision to break off the relationship with Jan for his benefit, the first item she packs is her Roman Catholic cross from the wall. She understood that her identity as an English Roman Catholic person poses a threat to Jan’s future and to this Afrikaans community into which she has moved because of her love for Jan. This is an unmasking of the way in which persons from the RC and Anglican churches were seen by most Afrikaners: as outsiders, not fitting in and not welcome into the exclusive Afrikaner society; not without giving up their own identity. In the boardroom, the scene had become reminiscent of the severe intolerance she has experienced. Images of granite busts with rigid glares and unmoveable furniture prevail. In one of the last scenes, Anton is again threateningly surrounded by the circle of granite busts from the Afrikaners’ past, while the watchful eye of the deceased founder still keeps glaring throughout.

It seems as though the producer wants the public to understand that the newly-found bond between Afrikaans and English South Africans is fragile, because it is being severely threatened by the Afrikaner’s view of exclusivity.

#### **4.3 Themes from *Die Kandidaat* in the Media**

The *National Film, Video and Sound Archives* (Archives) have been keeping an almost complete archive with cuttings from each publication which mentioned a South African film in the press. These cuttings include articles, reviews, letters-to-the-editor, news reports and more, which appeared in the press concerning *Die Kandidaat*, *Katrina* and *Jannie Totsiens*.

The news coverage of *Die Kandidaat* in the press started in the middle of 1967, when reports were leaked to the press that an Afrikaans film was being produced dissecting Afrikaner identity (*Die Vaderland* 23/11/67) and containing a story about “love for a woman not approved by the hierarchy (of Afrikanerdom)”, (*Natal Daily News* 23/11/67). The

suspense was developed that the film would focus on the immediate situation of the Afrikaners and not, as previously on popular topics (*Die Vaderland* 23/11/ 67), and that the public should be prepared for a sharp satire. “The Afrikaner is now mature enough to really have a good dig at aspects of his own way of life, that were sacrosanct in the past ... the Afrikaner will have a first class giggle at himself” (*Brakpan Herald* 17/11/67).

After the release of *Die Kandidaat*,<sup>197</sup> Jans Rautenbach as the director was invited to join the *Akademie*. His invitation came as an irony, as this film poked fun at and unmasked the injustices caused by Afrikaners. The producer Emil Nofal, being half English, was never invited to join the *Akademie* (*Die Transvaler* 31/3/1969).<sup>198</sup>

The film received extensive coverage in the press after release, in the form of reviews, discussions, opinions, articles and debates. Themes covered included the censorship that was applied at the time, Afrikaner identity, including language, the position of the Coloureds and the role of the church.

#### 4.3.1 Censorship

The film had to pass approval by the Publications Control Board (PCB) in order to be released for public distribution. Although speculation in the press predicted the possibility of deep cuts, only two scenes and the use of certain language were affected. All referrals to “Englishmen” were changed to “other people” (*Die Transvaler* 3/6 1968), while the word “skorriemorrie”, slang for a low-class person, was deleted, and “Catholics” were referred to as “foreigners” (*Die Beeld* 26/5/1968). After the release of the film, a lively debate followed in both the Afrikaans (about 70%) and the English (about 30%) press (*Die Transvaler* 31/3/1969).

The themes of these discussions and arguments can be summarised as *Afrikaner identity*, *Afrikaans language*, the *position of the Coloureds* and the *role of the church*.

#### 4.3.2 Afrikaner Identity

The essence of what constitutes a “ware Afrikaner” cut through the political landscape and came under scrutiny from both the “verligte” and “verkrampde” press (*Die Beeld* 14/1/1968). In some cases, the comment was made that the Afrikaner was ridiculed as rigid and narrow-minded (*Ster* 18/4/1968).

<sup>197</sup> *Die Kandidaat* was awarded a stipend by the *Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns* as a truly outstanding film (*Die Vaderland* 1/4/1969).

<sup>198</sup> The film was produced by Emil Nofal Filmproduksies (Edms) Bpk and distributed by Ster Films, with Mr Andre Pieterse as Managing Director (*The Star* 31/3/1969).

Anton's character was rejected in the comment of some viewers as projecting the Afrikaner as a "nihilist", as a smudge on the Afrikaner's identity, thereby creating suspicion about the Afrikaners (*Die Transvaler* 18/6/1968). In some other reports, the film was described as "true and real", projecting the discussions in the Afrikaner community of the last two years (Rykie van Reenen in *Die Beeld*, 14/1/1968 and *Die Transvaler* 5/8/1969). The film depicts both sides of the Afrikaner, illustrating the Afrikaner as "unidealised" and real (Schalk Pienaar in *Die Beeld* 21/4/1968) and seen as having been conceived by the producer before the "verlig/verkramp" concepts were coined by the academic from the Potchefstroom University, Prof Wimpie de Klerk (*Die Beeld* 21/4/1968). Some, however, considered it to be exactly about the "verlig/verkramp" quarrel (Stanley Uys in *The Sunday Times* 28/7/1968).

In the English press, it was reported that a member of parliament thought the "the film was amusing, but terrifying ... but it was good to deal with our prejudices frankly and on this basis" (*Cape Argus* 11/12/1968). Also from the English press came the comment that the Afrikaner identity is conflicted between accepting an English-speaking Roman Catholic girl into their midst or not, but also that the message of acceptance in the film comes across "loud and clear: The Afrikaner section must accept the English section" (Stanley Uys in *The Sunday Times* 28/7/1968).

When the film was shown to invited guests at a pre-launch event arranged by an Afrikaans newspaper, the result was a scathing attack on the film by almost all present, calling the film "shocking, a glorification of the anti-hero ... character, murder/slander and a roll in the muddy mess of immorality ("ontug"). It is a rape against the dignity of human beings. Each person around the table is totally rotten inside." These comments were clearly aimed against the way in which the Afrikaner identity was projected as fallible and human, not pure and perfect (*Dagbreek en Landstem* 26/5/1968, *The Rand Daily Mail* 29/5/1968).

#### 4.3.3 Afrikaans Language

The role of Prof Van Biljon as a fighter for the rights of Afrikaans emitted mixed reactions from audiences. It was clear to all that in the film the English-speaking South Africans were pictured as the primal enemy (*Die Beeld* 14/1/1968) and that the Afrikaner claimed the country as exclusively their own, to the exclusion of all other groups, languages and beliefs. (*Die Transvaler* 3/6/1968). In a sense, these perceptions denied the view by Nofal himself that a keen sense of cultural identification had evolved between Afrikaners and the English section of the population (*Sunday Times* 24/11/1968).<sup>199</sup> The view was aired that because

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<sup>199</sup> Emil Nofal saw himself as an English-speaking South African (*Die Transvaler* 23/5/1967). His parents immigrated to South Africa where Emil was born and he started work (as a general labourer) at Killarney Film Studios at age 14 (*Die Beeld* 30/3/1969).



Emil Nofal is primarily an English speaker the film would not be considered by the *Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns* for any awards (*Die Beeld* 2/6/1968).

#### **4.3.4 The Position of the Coloureds**

The Coloured population was only mentioned a few times in the debates that followed in the press. The question was posed whether the Coloureds, at nearly a million people who speak Afrikaans, should be viewed as Afrikaners (*Die Beeld* 14/1/1968).

Although it became clear at the close of the film that the protagonist Anton could be a so-called “baster”, a person of mixed race, the issues of mixed marriages and the Immorality Act never became points for discussion in the Afrikaans as well as the English press. It seems as though everybody in these audiences missed the meaning of the last scene, or that the subject was too sensitive and politically loaded for discussion.

#### **4.3.5 The Role of the Church**

The question put to Jackie whether she would relinquish her Roman Catholic faith in order to “fit in” was only asked once, as the censors cut the repetition of the question from the original script (*Die Transvaler* 3/1/1968). The way in which this question was put to her, nevertheless, succeeded in stripping her of her dignity, when she became “not good enough”. This was not discussed in the press, but instead viewers remarked that the Afrikaner is the one on the receiving side of negative imaging, being painted as immoral, corrupt, naïve and false (*Die Beeld* 24/11/1968). Absent from the press reports are any discussions on the role of the Dutch Reformed Church, or Dominee Perold and his remarks. No reports could be found of any viewer who was interest in the perceptions opened by the film in this regard, nor was there any reaction to the accusation by Anton that the voice of the church had been silenced.

#### **4.3.6 Media: Conclusion**

*Die Kandidaat* created only limited suspense and expectations before release, as no special efforts were made by the producers beforehand to obtain publicity. When analysing the press coverage before, during and after the film was released, it becomes obvious that although a lively debate was introduced with the release, most of the serious issues unmasked by the film were to a large extent ignored.

The film achieved unexpected success at the box office (*Die Transvaler* 3/6/1968 and 31/3/1969, *Die Beeld* 28/7/1968, *The Star* 30/7/1968). It was described as outspoken comment on controversial domestic issues, as an invitation to dialogue, and as well



presented with a strong dramatic impact and as one of the best motion pictures ever made in South Africa (*The Star* 31/3/1969)

#### 4.4 Conclusion

The filmmaker and producer started their mission, focussed on creating a view of the reality as perceived from within Afrikaner ranks. The focus was on the merciless immediacy and the threatening bleak future of Afrikaners (*Die Vaderland* 23/11/1967). The director made extensive use of images, artworks and camera shoots in order to impact on the viewer, and strong images in the form of artworks and camera shoots are furthermore utilised throughout the film.

The granite busts of previous prime ministers of South Africa, excluding Jan Smuts, but prominently displaying Paul Kruger (former president of the Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek) and Hendrik Verwoerd overshadow the meeting in the boardroom.<sup>200</sup>

The film opens with an outside scene, outside the building, portraying life-size images in granite of three persons, locked tightly by holding hands in what seems to present an unbreakable unity.

Inside, the larger-than-life granite bust of the founder, Adrian Delpot, overshadows the room in a menacing and aggressive stance. Replicating *The Thinker* in a way, it seems to tolerate no dissent, but to symbolise truth and knowledge. The candidate, in contrast, is a modern young man, as is the building which houses the *Foundation*.

The unmasking of violations against human dignity was achieved through the presentation of specific themes that were woven throughout the drama. It became clear from the reactions in the press that these themes and the intended impact were only grasped to a limited extent by the audiences. Clearly illustrated in the film were the violations against the human dignity of individuals, against the *other*. Jan le Roux, the candidate, was mercilessly asked to defend his “Afrikanerskap” (“Afrikanerdom”), while it was implied by the meeting that his juvenile criminal activities made him less worthy as a true Afrikaner. Jackie, the Roman Catholic English college graduate from Natal was diminished as a person of lesser standing, her principles questioned, her beliefs violated and her role as a woman degraded as a mere “help” in relation to her fiancé’s position. Sonja, when unveiled as Anton’s possibly Coloured mother, was not even granted the dignity of recognition by her son, nor was she granted an introduction to the meeting. Throughout the discussions, referrals to blacks and Coloureds were made in derogatory ways, their “place” pointed out according to the government policy and never questioned.

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<sup>200</sup> These granite busts were original works of art by the artist Coert Steynberg and was lent to the producer for this purpose by the artist himself (*Die Vaderland* 7/12/1967).

In Lourens Niemand's lifelong secret of his "bastard" son Anton, the violation of the dignity of Anton, his mother, but also of himself becomes apparent. Lourens had not claimed his own dignity with the courage of his own convictions and the recognition of his own acts, and had remained in a lifelong indignity towards himself. His role unmasks the identical situation of fellow South Africans who remained in undignified secret lives of conceit, untrue to themselves. The surname given to the chairman, Niemand, translates into "nobody", and he is pictured with a fragile identity that is overshadowed by Paula Neethling. His life has been one of indignity towards himself and he only finds dignity and respect at the end, after his recognition of Anton as his bastard son. He then also finds calmness and acceptance of himself.

The film's perception of God's presence is created in the redemptive personalities of Chrisjan at Boy's Town, the Dominee Perold and Jackie. Ds Perold makes an appeal to the meeting to understand the history of the Afrikaner in the light of the redemption offered by Christ, and another appeal to change, because "if we go on like this, we will soon all be in the dark", while the personalities of Jackie and Chrisjan manifest the kindness and care of lives filled with grace of God. The violation of the dignity of the *Other* is illustrated by the meeting's rejection of God when presented in any other form than in that of the three Afrikaans sister denominations. Rejected by the meeting are the Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Jews and all "foreigners as not God's people".

This film takes the viewer through the movements of keen *observation*, analytical *interpretation* and hopeful *anticipation*. The content resonates with reality, but although the screenings were extended by public acclaim and attendance records broken, the dialogue and interaction that resulted in the press and media did not succeed in displaying an understanding by the public of the essence of the social comment offered by the film, such as when Anton proclaims himself to be the "the only person present", implying his freedom to say what he wants to be his freedom to be truly human. He refers to the busts as those of "political puppets" ("politieke poppe"). He views himself in the same isolation as he finds the candidate, declaring: "Ek is ek!" ("I am me!")

The Afrikaner women are personified by Mrs Volschenk, a lady who, with her narrow-mindedness and moralistic judgemental views is intolerant of any views dissenting from her own. The *Sestigers* are doomed by her and in her view will only lead to the demise of all Afrikaners. This parody, however, has also not been grasped.

The young Afrikaner boys from Boys Town are mostly pictured as juveniles and in a situation where very little or no human dignity is granted to them. The redeeming presence of Chrisjan helps to soften their existence, but the prevailing images are of the bleak future with no

escape. This is the future that Jan wants to change, not only for these boys but for the future of his beloved Afrikaners.

The intricate relationship between Coloureds and whites in South Africa and the social implications are observed in the person of Anton, the “bastard” son of the chairman and a lady of uncertain decent, race and colour. He becomes the voice of anticipation, of freedom, who in doing so, has been ironically rewarded by his own fragile father, as in his last words to his father: “Somehow you have given me everything; the will of a bastard to survive,”<sup>201</sup> the will to find and be his own identity, so that people will proclaim: “There he stands, a man alone.” It seems that Anton in the end could find his identity in his humanity and not in his Afrikanerdom, as was prescribed to him by society.

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<sup>201</sup> “Tog het jy my alles gegee; die wil van ‘n basterkind om bo uit te kom.”

## Chapter 5: Katrina

### 5.1 Storyline

This film is a try-for-white drama with only a small number of main characters, although the background is in many scenes populated with many more, sometimes even with small crowds.

The film is set in the Bo-Kaap, a traditional Coloured area of Cape Town, and also in a small and picturesque Coloured village outside of town (The small town of Wuppertal was used in the film). The contrast between city dwelling and the poverty within the village is clear.

Katrina is the protagonist of this very sad drama. She is a beautiful and talented woman with many secrets, while her choices in life lead to devastation for those close to her. Her greatest secret that unfolds as the story proceeds is that she was born as Katrina September, a Coloured girl in the village, but that she chose to escape those circumstances by pretending to be white. She became a white upper class lady, Catherine Winters. Her “husband” has passed away, leaving her with a blond and blue-eyed son Paul, who recently qualified as a medical doctor in England. While she leads this “white” life of her choice, she is portrayed as a deeply troubled person, singing sad songs to the audiences at night in her restaurant. Paul is completely unaware of his mother’s background.

Kimberley is a middle-aged Coloured man who is the voice of redemption in the film. His life is challenging, selling funeral insurance as his means of income to people in the Bo-Kaap. Notwithstanding his dire circumstances, he is portrayed as a caring person who displays compassion and empathy to all. His efforts result in building up the church congregation when a new pastor arrives and in initiating a medical practice for Paul on his return from the United Kingdom (UK). Unknown to the viewer and only revealed at the very end, is that he is also Paul’s father. He is a solitary voice of redemption in the film, at the end joined in this role by Paul.

Paul is a young innocent and idealistic white doctor, arriving from England with his bride-to-be, Alida, at his side. She is a blond Afrikaner from a traditional Afrikaans lower-middle class home. The film shows both as innocent and trusting, and the developing young love is beautifully portrayed.

The newly arrived pastor, Alex Llewellyn, arrives on the scene at the start of the film. He is a white priest who, after a six months battle with alcoholism, makes a new start, where he has

to build up this empty congregation in the Bo-Kaap. This is the one space where an interracial community is allowed and the church slowly fills with people from all races. The lovely architecture of the church building encompasses an array of icons and symbols inside that are being used throughout the film to portray messages. Alex is shown fighting his demons from time to time during the film, when tension builds up in his private life. He falls in love with Katrina, who he knows as Catherine, and wants to marry her, while she requests more time. He is the “voice of God”, but is portrayed as increasingly more troubled and confused.

Katrina has a brother, Adam, residing in the village and known as the local leader of the Coloured community. He is tense, angry, sarcastic and bitter and proudly identifies with “his people”, the Coloured community. His anger is directed at Katrina, but also at all who do not identify with and share his perspective of Coloured identity, while he works for the betterment of his community. Adam has so far kept Katrina’s secret, but he is the person who during the film confronts Alex with the truth of Katrina’s “blood”.

The film starts by luring the viewer into a slow and peaceful Cape Town, where initially none of the devastating sub-currents are present. Paul arrives at the airport from England and unknown to him or Katrina, Kimberley watches his arrival through the crowd. It is clear from the beginning that Katrina wants Paul to go back to England as soon as possible. Arriving with him is Alida, and they are obviously in love.

The story unfolds with the arrival of the new pastor, Alex, and a love relationship develops between him and Katrina. Kimberley is the bystander and watches with trepidation as both these relationships develop.

In a confrontation between mother and son, Paul makes it clear that he will stay in Cape Town and that he plans to marry Alida. The growing tension within Katrina is clear.

During the welcoming ceremony for Alex at the church, a speech is delivered by a black priest, the only voice of openly political resistance in the film. He clearly has recently arrived back in South Africa from abroad and from being intimately involved in the armed struggle against apartheid. He is outspoken against the current political situation and a confrontation with Adam ensues where Adam states his pride in being Coloured, while the priest professes his view and dream of a “colour-blind” society.

The drama sets in when Kimberley arrives at Katrina’s house one evening informing her that “an old Coloured maid” of hers is dying in the village and that she should say her goodbyes

before it is too late. She gives in after an argument and Kimberley drives her and Paul to the village the following morning.

Lizzie, Katrina's mother, is on her last breath and is found in the poverty that has become the norm in the village. Introducing herself as "Mrs Winters" to Lizzie, and Paul as her son, Lizzie however recognizes her "after all these years" and is visibly overjoyed. Katrina breaks down at the bedside after Paul has left the room, embracing her mother in tears.

Before they leave, a confrontational scene follows between Adam and Katrina, brother and sister, and she instructs as well as begs him to never inform Paul of his background.

Paul has been very busy settling into the medical practice in the Bo-Kaap into which Kimberley has manipulated him. Scenes follow of healing that he brings, including also the birth of new life for a little girl. Katrina rejects this new life he has found: "You're mixing with them too much. I don't like it. They can find their own doctors", but it becomes clear that Paul finds meaning and joy in his new practice.

In the meantime, after Lizzie's funeral where Katrina has confessed to Adam about her and Alex, and the probability of marriage, Adam has taken it upon himself to inform Alex of Katrina's "blood line". This confrontation takes place in the empty church, while the music and the film shots of the icons surrounding the pews lead to the dramatic effect of impending disaster.

In dealing with this revelation by Adam, Alex also has to confront his own beliefs and prejudices. He is shown in turmoil, reverting back to a night of alcoholic stupor, fighting with, even shouting at his God, the laws of the country and himself. In a baptism scene in his church, he uses the text from the Bible about Jesus and the children<sup>202</sup> for his sermon, but breaks down afterwards, grabbing his alcohol. Kimberley then arrives with Paul to assist him medically and in a moment of terrible misjudgement Alex accuses Paul of being part of this grotesque deception.

Paul, innocent of all deceit, is shattered and devastated. The following scene shows Paul trying to survive a night of extreme loneliness, sadness and anguish, while the heart breaking song "Don't you feel like crying?" fills the night. The pain and destruction caused to him by this knowledge is powerfully illustrated.

Only days before Paul has asked Alida's father for her hand in marriage and he was proudly accepted, not only by her father, but also by the friends and family as a "doctor" to be proud

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<sup>202</sup> See Mark 10:13-16.

of. Alida has a younger brother, a troublesome teenager, who is painted as creating fights with Coloured boys from time to time, simply because he despises “them”.

Alida’s father had arranged the engagement party which coincides with the night when the news of his Coloured mother was broken to Paul. While he suffers through his own crisis in his room, Alida, her family and the guests wait for him in vain. Alida moves into despair as she realizes that Paul will not show, wondering if she is “too ugly” for him. Nobody is prepared for the truth that will follow.

The father is dumbfounded by the news, searches for Paul and finds him in his room, but being a “true” Afrikaner, he, although saddened and also broken, finds it impossible to accept Paul into his family. On hearing the news from her dad, Alida breaks down, pronouncing Paul a better person than those around her. It is clear, however, that she will follow the self-evident path of breaking the relationship with Paul.

In a follow-up scene on the beach the next day, where Paul and Alida part, her brother arrives with his gang on their motorcycles. They attack Paul, nearly killing him “because he is a Coloured and touched my sister”. The brother, arriving home, is hit by his dad in a moment of complete powerlessness against these forces of destruction, pronouncing him to be ashamed of his son and all being “so unnecessary”.

After the night of self-confrontation by Alex, Paul asks Kimberley to show him (Alex) Katrina’s village, where she had grown up. He is clearly still in turmoil and trying to come to grips with himself and the situation. The visit emphasises the bleak contrast of the circumstances in the village to the current lifestyle of “Mrs Winters” in town. It furthermore turns into a confrontation with Adam, who proudly, but also sadly, shows off the children of the village in all colours from white to dark brown. Adam points out his own boy, blond and white with blue eyes, professing his fear of losing him. He wants his children, including his blond boy, to grow up being proud of being Coloured and to remain in the village (“he can have a life here”). It is clear that his almost frantic hold on identity is driven by his fear of losing those who are valuable to him.

Alex professes to Adam that he wants children with Katrina, but Adam brutally confronts him with the logical result of such a marriage, “half breeds. Nothings! It’s easy to make children, everybody can, that’s why there are so many nothings.”

In a beautifully serene scene of the village, the villagers are portrayed walking the hilly footpath to church. In outdoor surroundings, the choir takes its place. Alex arrives, informing Kimberley that he needs to go away for a while, but he seems deeply troubled. On offering



the keys of the church to Kimberley for his care, Kimberley throws them back at Alex, not prepared to be accomplice in his treason against Katrina.

When the men from the village arrive back, carrying the beaten and broken Paul, it turns into an event of homecoming for Kimberley, who welcomes him as “Dr Paul, my boy, what have they done to you?” He is clearly relieved that the secret has been revealed, informing Katrina that they now do not have to hide anymore, they can have a life together as man and wife. Katrina is repulsed by this turning and pronounces to him: “I can’t live with you – you are a Coloured. I am white – stay away from me! Both of you!” With these deliberate words, she devastates both Kimberley and Paul.

In a sad last scene between Katrina and Alex, he is seen walking the footpath out of the village, leaving them all, while she runs after him. She begs him to take her with him, but he answers her in the past tense. He proclaims that he was wrong to think that their colour would not matter. He wants children, but his children must be like him, not different. She finds this a complete rejection of herself; nothing is left for him of Catherine and their relationship.

Alex keeps on walking, out of her life.

Katrina is shown on the beach, contemplative and in anguish.

In the last scene, her body is carried home by Kimberley. The village bells toll but the homecoming is sad.

## **5.2 Themes from *Katrina***

The film focuses on white and Coloured relationships (not on the black-white situation) and it unmask the forces at play in various complicated cultural scenarios.

### **5.2.1 Race Classification and Mixed Marriages**

The classification of people into different racial categories in South Africa and the devastating effects of this social engineering on individuals, societies and groups are the main focuses of this film. The two parallel love stories that unfold picture Katrina, a Coloured woman “trying for white”,<sup>203</sup> in love with the white priest, while her son, who should be a Coloured by classification but is obviously a blond and white young man, is in a relationship with Alida, a white Afrikaner girl. In the first case, only one party, the priest, is unaware of the

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<sup>203</sup> The obvious benefits of being white in SA during the 1960s, instead of being Coloured, led to the phenomenon where light-skinned Coloured people “tried” to pass as “whites”.

racial divide, while in the second case neither Paul nor Alida has any knowledge of “colour” as an issue in their relationship, both being “white”.

In the development of these relationships, the very real dramas playing out in South Africa are unmasked for the indignity caused by the different apartheid or race laws.<sup>204</sup> The producer used this theme in order to open the eyes of fellow Afrikaners to the obvious consequences of apartheid that could be seen playing out daily in the society and which is illustrated by the sad story of Sandra Laing that became known in South Africa at the same time *Katrina* was produced.<sup>205</sup> These real-life consequences were unmasked by the sad story of *Katrina*.

Sandra was born in SA in 1955 of conservative white Afrikaner parents who were fervent supporters of the Nationalist Party. It became clear that Sandra, due to her skin colour and hair texture appeared as a non-white or Coloured person according to the racial classification system of the time. Genetic testing at the time was restricted to blood tests only and a variety of crude testing methods, which mostly relied on the judgement of the officials involved, were also utilised.<sup>206</sup> Nature had played its part. Although in Sandra’s case both parents could for three generations trace back their origins to German and Dutch forebearers, a genetic throw-back resulted that a pigment of an unknown black ancestor that had lain dormant for generations, manifested in Sandra.

During her young life, she was raised as a white person in white cultural circles (Afrikaans school and church, DRC), but in an unfortunate way she was forcefully and physically removed from her all-white school at the age of ten by police officers (*Die Burger* 3/5/1967). This was the start of a traumatic chain of events, leading to Sandra being forced to attend a school 900 km away from home. She was then classified as Coloured and back again to white after her parents won a court case in 1966.<sup>207</sup> She eloped at sixteen with a black man and was thereafter threatened with losing her two Coloured children (with him), as a white person (as she was at this stage “white” again) was not allowed to raise Coloured children (*The Guardian*, 17 March 2003). Sandra then, at 26, applied to be reclassified as coloured. (Her father previously had refused his consent). After a second marriage to a black man, and

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<sup>204</sup> Historical context discussed in Chapter 3.

<sup>205</sup> The division, sadness and guilt are portrayed in a number of books and films about this social tragedy. The film *Skin* is based on the book by Judith Stone, n.d., *When She was White: The True Story of a Family Divided by Race*. Documentary films were made to capture this history, inter alia *In Search of Sandra Laing* (1977), by the BBC, *Sandra Laing: A Spiritual Journey* (2000) and *Skin Deep: The Story of Sandra Laing* (2009).

<sup>206</sup> See discussion in Giliomee 2003:503-507.

<sup>207</sup> The law was changed to allow a person to be classified as white if both her parents were classified as white.

three more children, she at last reunited with her mother shortly before the elderly woman passed away. She was never united with her father before his death and to date also not with her two brothers (Pretorius 2014: 330).

This sad history illustrates how not only Sandra, but both her parents were forced into the indignity of racial determination, and even of blood tests in order to find proof of her origin. The daily indignity of being ignored as a child at church and in society and being refused by nine schools was bestowed upon her. Her troubled life became newsworthy only during the later years of apartheid.<sup>208</sup>

South Africa became notorious in the world for its apartheid policies, although it was not the only country in the world with legally enforceable race classifications and ban on interracial marriages.<sup>209</sup> Indignity caused by such discriminating acts and cultural mores, as illustrated in *Katrina*, presented simultaneously in other cultures as well, and remains as an illustration of the damage caused to the humanity of people by ignoring and disregarding the human dignity of others.

The producer of *Katrina* issued a call to viewers to open their eyes to these consequences and to recognise the destruction caused hereby on human lives. In many spheres and in many different social communities, the consequences of race classification was felt, as, for instance, when a Captain in the South African Navy had to relocate to Japan because he married a Japanese lady, who was not welcomed as a “white” in SA (*Die Burger* 21/12/1966) while the well-known South African poet and writer, Breyten Breytenbach, who could not live in white SA because of his Vietnamese wife. (He was later arrested and jailed after a 1975 clandestine visit to SA on charges of revolutionary conduct). (Giliomee 2003:570). The film portrays the consequences of the apartheid policy by introducing questions about the future of children of mixed marriages. From the start of the film, the question is put: “What about the children?” In the village where Adam lives, the children are shown, differing in colour, but

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<sup>208</sup> “In 1976 when there were uprisings against apartheid and the education system, I turned 21 and I thought things would change. I applied for an identity document then, but it took six years before I finally got my first ID as a Coloured. Until then I could not prove who I was or find work, or open an account or do whatever a person had to do” (Pretorius 2014:330).

<sup>209</sup> Although slavery was abolished in the United States in 1865, it was still illegal for interracial couples to marry in 1965 in some of the states. This is clearly illustrated by the history of Richard and Mildred Loving, a white man and a woman of colour who married in Washington, DC in 1958. When they returned to Virginia, they were arrested for violating anti-miscegenation laws and sentenced to one year in prison, but which would be suspended if the couple agreed to leave the state. They moved to DC, but were frustrated because they could not travel together to their families in Virginia. Mildred wrote to the Attorney General in 1963 and this resulted in interracial marriage to become legal in all 50 states (*Time* 14/11/ 2016).

happily playing, while Adam's biggest anxiety is the future of his little blond boy. He calls the little Coloured children "nothings", with no future.<sup>210</sup>

During a church service where the priest Alex baptises a baby, he preaches against prejudice and proclaims that "an offense against a child is an offence against God himself", but he himself cannot at the end of the film act according to that faith, as he walks away from Katrina because he wants his children "to be like me, and to be with me, not to be different". He proclaims: "I am going back to my work, my God. Is it so wrong to want children like me?"

### 5.2.2 Race Classification and Group Areas

In the film, lifestyles amongst the white community in Cape Town, where Katrina finds her identity, differ considerably from the Coloured village where Kimberley and Katrina's family originated, and which they still call "home". They display intricate social bonds and commitments to those living in the relative poverty of rural life.

Katrina shows no bonds to the village or her people. She has become entrenched in the "white areas", so designated by the Group Areas Act.<sup>211</sup> The impossibility to be "white" in a Coloured area, or *vice versa*, is clearly demonstrated by the heartbreaking speech Adam delivers to the priest in an attempt to make him understand the immensity of the tragedy. He is obviously in anxiety about the future of his own children, as his own little blond and blue-eyed boy may one day be lost to him in his own "try-for-white" effort, or so enforced by the system. In the village little boys and girls are pictured, innocently at play and unaware of the political impacts and consequences of the colour of their skins, varying from dark white to dark brown. The way in which the system will deal with them is shown up by the terrible events that followed.

The observation and interpretation offered by the story of *Katrina* present a true reflection of the lives of many South Africans at the time and illustrated in many true life stories of the time. Unmasking the violations of the human dignity of persons as reported in the local press, a cry was sent out by the fictitious story of the film for the acknowledgement of the real-life tragedies.

Playing out in real life was the story of the Wicomb family who lived in Epping, a white Cape Town suburb. The one brother, Randall, a blond child, went to white schools, used white busses and went to a white university. The brother Winston was a "brown" baby, a Coloured child, while the dad was classified as Coloured, but had himself reclassified as white before

<sup>210</sup> In perceiving himself as Coloured, Adam claims an identity. He does not want his child to be a "nothing", an in-between-identity of trying-to-be-white.

<sup>211</sup> See Chapter 3.

1950. The family had four children of which two were dark (Winston and one brother) and two were white (Randall and a sister). Two Coloureds in Coloured schools, and two white children in Jan van Riebeeck, one of the top white Afrikaans schools in Cape Town.

The family lived in trepidation of being “found out”. Whenever visitors came to the house, Winston had to hide in a cupboard, not to be seen by them. When his elder brother Randall brought his white wife-to-be and her family home to meet the future in-laws, Winston was sent away for the duration of the visit. Winston was also pressured by his family to hand over his first car, brand new, to his brother Randall who, according to his parents, as a student at the white University of Stellenbosch, needed it more. Winston paid it off while the brother was using it, making the parents proud of the white son. Because of a promotion at his work, the father became the chauffeur of the Prime Minister, J G Strydom and he then succeeded in befriending senior colleagues and was issued with “white papers” for his children. This resulted in Winston being drafted for the army, where he continually suffered abuse by his fellow white soldiers who described the army as “for whites” only. He fell in love with the white girl he befriended, because she was white (as a trophy), but they got married and were still a happy couple at Randall’s funeral in 2016.<sup>212</sup> Randall became one of South Africa’s best known Afrikaans singers, a “true” Afrikaner who was embraced by his fellow white Afrikaners (Rapport 23/1/2016).

This split down the centres of families, caused by racial classification, was illustrated clearly by the film. In the film, Alida’s father is devastated when it expires that Paul is a “Coloured” boy. He has foreseen a wonderful future for Alida with Paul, but obviously in Afrikaner circles, and his immediate reaction to Paul’s explanation is a definite “(y)ou cannot marry him, you cannot see him anymore” to Alida. He tries to answer her desperate question: “Why, tell my why? Paul is better than us!”, but finds only the following to say: “I do not know. It is how we live. The whole world does not understand this ... my only security is that I am an Afrikaner and we do not marry anybody (“rond en bont”). We are white, they are brown ... We do not hate the Coloureds, but in our country white and brown do not mix. Each must stay with his own. You are white and you must have white children.”

The mid-1960s were also marked by forced removals of people into areas designated for each race, and in Cape Town the epic removal of 65 000 mostly Coloured people from

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<sup>212</sup> Winston’s life took a turn when he, as a post-graduate student in biochemistry helped the world-renowned Dr Chris Barnard to fix his broken-down car (a part-time job of Winston’s) and was invited to join the heart surgeon’s team at the Groote Schuur Hospital, where he invented a ground-breaking apparatus, which made him internationally known in his field. He then could move to the United States, where he could pursue a career without the restrictions of the apartheid government (Rapport 23/1/2016).

District Six, declared white, took place as *Katrina* was being filmed. A residential area in the centre of Cape Town that existed since the first settlers came to the Cape was called District Six from 1867 onwards (*Die Burger* 13/2/2016). The area consisted of people from all races who lived together as an established community. On 11<sup>th</sup> February 1966, District Six was declared a “white” area and demolition of the properties that eventually took more than a decade, started. At the end of the process, 65 000 people had been moved to areas mostly on the Cape Flats (Giliomee 2003:505).

The film clearly illustrates the different group areas, where whites and Coloured people lived separately and unfamiliar to each other’s lifestyles. This artificial divide grew into scarred relationships and into loss of identity on both sides. The separate living areas also had an influence on the wider cultural activities, as these were driven by separate schools and manifested in separate societies. In *Katrina*, the cultural activity of choir singing in the rural village is beautifully illustrated where old and young sing together, all from the local Coloured village, displaying various skin colours from white to dark brown. The film unmasks these cultural divides by portraying in this way the real-life situation where The Eoan Group, a well-known opera and ballet group, was celebrated for their contribution to Coloured culture and called a “power within the Coloured community”.<sup>213</sup>

### 5.2.3 Sport

South Africans are outdoor people and taking part in all kind of sports has always been a part of the lifestyle of both English and Afrikaans-speaking communities. Sport forms part of the everyday lives of the people in the village.

The viewer is shown how ordinary village life includes the leisure activities that sport offers and how young people and children play outside as part of their culture, the partaking of sport as within (segregated) communities and therefore along colour lines. Sport has traditionally been a key ingredient of the Coloured population at the Cape and participation manifested in various sporting activities, of which cricket and rugby seems to have been the most popular during the 1960s (Pretorius 2014:560). The same sporting activities were popular amongst the white Afrikaner population, with rugby elevated to being the “national” sport, but the teams were selected along racial lines.

Basil D’Oliviera, a talented cricket player from the Cape who had moved to the United Kingdom in order to play serious and competitive non-racial cricket, as he was a Coloured and excluded from national teams in SA, was included in a British cricket team to tour South

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<sup>213</sup> The Eoan Group obtained their own expensive theatre, the *Joseph Stone Cultural Centre* (*Die Burger* 26/1/1967).

Africa during the 1968-1969 season (Pretorius 2014:561). He was then declared not welcome in South Africa by the then Minister of the Interior, who declared that he would not be permitted to enter the country. His inclusion into the British team was seen as a challenge to the government policy and the Prime Minister, John Vorster, declared the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) team as no longer welcome, whereupon the MCC cancelled the tour (Pretorius 2014:561). This action by the South African government ignited international criticism against the racial policies of the Republic and the incident became known as the “D’Oliviera Affair” (*Die Burger* 26/1/1967).<sup>214</sup>

Scenes in the film portray the young children taking part in informal sport, but the question about their participation in serious, competitive and international sport is opened to the viewer. Will they be granted the dignity of achieving success?

#### 5.2.4 The Role of the Churches

The film seeks to highlight three aspects of the role of religion in South Africa during the 1960s. In the *first* place, the conflicted white priest in one of the main roles, who falls in love with Katrina, symbolises the paradox that many believers were experiencing during that period. As a man of God, he serves in a congregation where all races are welcome (tolerated by the government), preaching the love of God for all, but he fails to see the conflict within the message he has for his flock. In a heated argument with Adam, the following transpires:

Priest: “Nobody is nothing in the eyes of the Lord. We are not to judge people by the colour of their skin or the shape of their nose.

Adam: “You have no right to make lives like that, but you go on making people like that (half breeds) and you think it does not matter?”

Priest: “Faith is stronger than your prejudice.”

Adam: “Nothing is stronger!”

Priest: “It is not the colour of your skin that makes you black – it’s your heart. You’re black, black, black!”

A debate of this nature was not uncommon during the 1960s, as many people, including office bearers in the churches, were caught in the paradox offered by a specific perspective

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<sup>214</sup> A Coloured South African rugby player, Frank Wilson, was reported to have made a heart-breaking decision not to be available to tour SA for the international side from Wales, where he was playing rugby, as this would put his team mates in jeopardy (*Die Burger* 10/2/1967).



on morality. The Reformed Ecumenical Synod expressed itself ambivalently on the question of racial separation at the time.<sup>215</sup>

*Secondly*, the film lets the light fall on the active resistance, even armed resistance, of some church leaders against the government policy. In a serious discussion with Adam, a visiting black South African priest explains his active involvement in the armed struggle. (A few cuts were made from this scene by the Publications Control Board). The priest is part of the armed struggle and personifies this active resistance role of some of the churches during the struggle period. At a funeral service, the visiting black priest declares: “All over the world the Christian people cry with us. They send this message to us, my brothers and sisters of the church, they say: ‘One day this discrimination will be finished. Every man will be his one master...’ The very best thing I remember was the true brotherhood amongst men everywhere. All races working together. I will be happy to be back here in SA. We have plenty to do.” He continues: “We must have equal rights, like all men. The church must also fight.”<sup>216</sup>

Adam responds to this challenge by stating that he is not one of them, “I am not a black;”<sup>217</sup> that he wants only “good for my people but they must work honest and they must work hard ... the law of my God does NOT speak of killings.”

*Thirdly*, the film unmaskes the absence of the voice of the traditional three Afrikaans churches during the 1960s, as nowhere during the unfolding drama of *Katrina* does the Afrikaans churches speak. They were not only quiet, but apartheid was further entrenched, as is illustrated by the Synod’s decision to refer to non-white pastors as “Eerwaarde” and not as “Dominee” (*Die Burger* 15/10/1966).

### 5.2.5 Coloured Identity

A clear definition of one view of identity amongst the Coloured population manifests in the film in the persona of Adam, Katrina’s brother. In a stark contrast to Karina, who is “trying-to-

<sup>215</sup> “Synod states as its belief that God’s Word does not teach either racial integration or separate racial development as a universal regulative principle expressing God’s will for our Christian Conduct in race relations.” A declaration issued by the Reformed Ecumenical Synod in 1963 (Landman:132).

<sup>216</sup> The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) was a grass roots anti-apartheid movement that emerged in the mid-1960s in the vacuum that was left by the banning of the ANC (1960) and the Sharpeville riots. The movement was deeply rooted in Christianity and built on the University Christian Movement (UCM), formed after a meeting convened by the Archbishop Robert Selby Taylor (Anglican Church) in 1966. Steve Biko and Barney Pitsoana developed the BCM during the late 1960s, and this movement reflected the concern for the existential struggle of the black person as a dignified human being, proud of his/her blackness. By June 1976, 123 key members of the BCM had been banned (Black Consciousness Movement. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black\\_Consciousness\\_Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Consciousness_Movement). 30/11/2016). See also Chapter 3 para 3.1.4

<sup>217</sup> He accepts his identity as Coloured, to be differentiated from “black” in his perception.

be-white", Adam embraces his Coloured identity and identifies with this identity as pictured by and embodied in the policies of the government, of separate identity. He embraces, though clearly bitterly, his fate as a Coloured and it seems to uphold all his ideals within his "group", as Coloured.

Adam has a sure grasp of his own identity as a Coloured person, but it is built on an underlying fear that he projects onto his little "white" boy: "He is white. I love my son. But one day he will grow up and then he's white. I will lose my son. He will try for white. I don't want him to grow up. I don't want this to happen. I want my son. I love him, but he must stay with me. We can have a good life here. We can work and make us all proud. Then my son can stand up and say: 'I am a Coloured', and not be ashamed of his father and says: 'There goes Adam, my mother's garden boy.' I am frightened to lose my son."

In contrast to the above hopes and aspirations, the viewer is confronted with the brokenness of the lives of those whose identity has become split. These people experienced the situation of "outsiders" who will never belong, and who have to deal with indignities within their circumstances on a daily basis.

Katrina, who chose to live as white, is the one who chose to move into another identity to which she does not truly belong and will forever bear the consequences. Paul, her son, was forced by her into an identity he has never suspected and during the unmasking of his Coloured background and through the process of "instant colourisation", embraces his Coloured identity and also embraces the view of Adam by becoming a proudly "Coloured" person. He finds dignity in his new persona and dedicates his life to his group. Katrina views Paul's newly found calling to work as a doctor amongst the Coloured population in another way: "They can find their own doctors. I didn't send you to university to waste your life."<sup>218</sup>

The white priest, Alex, backs away from Katrina when her identity as a Coloured is unmasked; he then inflicts indignity on himself by not recognising his own humanity and his own self. He also inflicts indignity on Katrina by his rejection of her. He is clearly conflicted and he fails to integrate the new revelation about Katrina's "colour" into his Christian belief system.

Kimberley, being true to himself, is the one presence of redemption. He is the one who, as a Coloured, has previously accepted the loss of his child (Adam) and the mother (Katrina) by staying true to himself. He never lost his love for Katrina as he kept watch and guarded her,

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<sup>218</sup> In a scene at the close of the film, Katrina rejects Kimberley (who as the father of Paul wants to marry her as all has now been revealed) with the words: "I can't live with you! You are a Coloured! I am white – stay away from me!"

though from a distance; and although she never grants him the dignity of recognition as Paul's father, he kept true to his self and cultivated a quiet but solid dignity within his own self. He is a classified Coloured person, lives as a Coloured and has no quarrel with his identity.

In the South African politics, this issue of Coloured identity became the focus of a commission of inquiry in the early 1970s, and in 1973 the government appointed the *Erika Theron Commission of Enquiry* into the position of Coloureds.<sup>219</sup> This commission included coloured members as part of such a commission for the first time. The Report was tabled on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1976, two days after the Soweto riots broke out, and its influence thus dissipated. The Commission did not in their report denounce apartheid, but did recommend a direct say for Coloured people in government. It did criticise government for the neglect of the Coloured population and made a number of recommendations, such as the repeal of the Mixed Marriages Act (Act 55 of 1949) and Section 16 of the Immorality Act (Act 23 of 1957). It also recommended direct representation for Coloureds at the various levels of government. Most of the recommendations were rejected by way of an interim memorandum and later in a White Paper and the so-called "Coloured Issue" remained unresolved, with the *status quo* as dictated by the various laws. This situation directly led to active participation of Coloured people in the Soweto uprising (Giliomee 2003:558).

The Coloured identity seemed to have moved from an uncertain "maybe" white and Afrikaans, as was seen as a possible scenario during the early 1960s,<sup>220</sup> to a definite identification by the majority of Coloured people against Afrikaans, in consolidation of black resistance by 1976 (Giliomee 2003:558).

The split in the Coloured community about their identity is clearly unmasked by the personae of Adam on the one side and Katrina, his sister, embodying the other view.<sup>221</sup> The damage to relationships, identity and Christian convictions becomes clear in the destruction that followed through the development of the story.

<sup>219</sup> *Commission of Enquiry into Matters Relating to the Coloured Population Group*, chaired by Prof Erika Theron. Die Erika Theron-Kommissie, 1973-1976: 'n Historiese Studie (*Die Burger*, 25/6/2016) <https://scholar.sun.ac.za/handle/10019.1/51698>, Accessed 9/23/2016).

<sup>220</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>221</sup> Adam clearly supports the view of the NP as voiced by the Prime Minister B J Vorster, that he is being honest towards the Coloureds by recognising their identity as a specific and different group (*Die Burger* 23/9/1966).

### 5.3 Themes from *Katrina* in the Media

The film *Katrina* was based on the book *Try for White* (*Die Transvaler* 12/10/1968, *Daily Representative* 16/10/1968).<sup>222</sup> The themes discussed included the image of Afrikanerdom, Coloured identity, questions about the intent of the film and the “verlig/verkramp” issue. This reaction should be seen against the background against which the film was released.

#### 5.3.1 Background to Press Reaction

Both the English and Afrikaans press created substantial expectations about the content of the film before it was released to the public on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1969 (*Cape Times* 20/6/1969) in a premiere in Durban (*Die Beeld* 6/10/1968, *Sunday Tribune* 13/10/1968, *The Star* 5/10/1968, *Potchefstroom News* 10/1/1969). Expectations were also built around the quality of the filming process, and the film was applauded from a wide range of newspapers as possibly the best ever produced in South Africa, on par with world standards (*The Star* 29/8/1969, *The Rand Daily Mail* 25/6/1969, *Die Vaderland* 25/6/1969, *Jewish Herald* 1/7/1969). The Publications Control Board (PBC) issued an “A” Certificate to the film, which cleared viewings to all races and all ages, but only after certain cuts to the film were effected. Most of the mainstream newspapers reported on the few changes effected to the film by the PBC and what that meant for the future of films, as well as the role played by the so-called “chief censor” Mr Jannie Kruger during the screening process (*The Cape Times* 20 and 28/6/1969, *The Star* 21 and 23/6/1969, *The Sunday Express* 22/6/1969, *Die Transvaler* 21 and 31/6/1969, *Die Beeld* 22/6/1969, *The Cape Argus* 19/6/1969, *Die Oosterlig* 20/6/1969, *Natal Daily News* 20/6/1969, *Die Volksblad* 12/6/1969, *Die Burger* 23/6/1969).

According to these reports, the Minister of the Interior (Lourens Muller) had “so much faith” in the PBC that he did not request to view the film himself, but approved the film on the recommendation of this Board (*The Sunday Tribune* 29/6/1968). According to some Afrikaans newspapers, the PCB fulfilled a political role and used “political censorship in the broadest sense of the word” (*Die Beeld* 1/6/1969).

Following on all the speculation about what would be “cut” by the PBC, only fifty-two seconds were in reality cut out of the 110 minutes long film. These scenes included parts of a beach fight between Paul (who had become an “instant” Coloured) and his white friends,

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<sup>222</sup> The author Basil Warner was a Coloured person from the Signal Hill community. He based his book on an incident he had witnessed as a child of ten years old: A young woman he knew had a relationship with a white man, pretending to be white and pretending the old woman with her, her mother, to be her servant. “...he felled her with a savage punch” after finding out her race. She said: “I was good enough to sleep with you for 12 years, why is it different now?,” (*The Rand Daily Mail* 4/8/1969).

as well as snippets from a speech by the black revolutionary priest where a reference to “hatings and killings” in his speech were changed. At the demand of the PBC, a line describing a dying Coloured woman “as going straight to heaven, but by the back door”, was changed to “...to heaven as all my people do” (*The Rand Daily Mail* 25/6/1969). Reports on these changes were published widely, indicating a keen interest by the public in the film as well as in the influence of the PBC (*The Cape Times* 20/6/1969, *The Star*, 21 and 23/6/1969, *The Sunday Express* 22/6/1969, *Die Beeld* 22/6/1969, *Die Volksblad* 20 and 21/6/1969, *The Cape Argus* 19/6/1969, *Die Oosterlig* 20/6/1969, *Natal Daily News* 20/6/1969, *Die Burger* 21/6/1969).

The well-known Afrikaans poet and writer, N P van Wyk Louw, one of a selected group invited to a pre-show by the producer, commented afterwards that it would be a disaster if the film was banned (*Die Transvaler* 19/6/1969). “It was a brilliant, moving and beautiful tragedy, and one which should not be denied the South African public,” and “*Katrina* did not express anti-government sentiments, but merely brought out with deep and beautiful insight the human problems of the Coloured people” (Louw in *The Sunday Times* 15/6/1969). Also, according to Louw, the film reminded one of a Greek tragedy. When he was a lecturer at the University of Cape Town (open to all races at that time), a blond, blue-eyed student in his class could not apply to do his practical training at Jan van Riebeeck High School (whites only), because, “Mr Louw, I can’t, I am a Coloured” (*Die Beeld* 8/6/1969). He used this incident as an illustration of the tragedy referred to and it is an example of the effective unmasking of such situations by the producer.

The film remained controversial after its release, and an interdict was achieved by the producers against the distributors of *Ster* (Issue 29/8/1969), an Afrikaans magazine which spent nearly a full issue (23 pages) on publishing critical views on *Katrina*.<sup>223</sup>

### 5.3.1.1 The Cast

All the main characters were played by whites, playing the roles of Coloureds: Katrina, Adam, Kimberley, as well as Paul. During the 1960s, producers were not allowed to have a racially mixed group of actors in front of the camera simultaneously, unless the roles were only supportive or symbolic. Real and meaningful dialogue on screen was only acceptable between and amongst the same race group (this was also the situation on stage in live

<sup>223</sup> The interdict was obtained against the publisher Republikeinse Publikasies (Edms) Bpk. of which Dr Albert Hertzog was part, but it was later set aside. The interdict was obtained by a midnight appeal to the judge and this drama was fully reported in the media (*Die Transvaler* 20/8/1969, *The Sunday Tribune* 24/8/1969, *The Star* 20/8/1969, *Die Vaderland* 20/8/1969, *Natal Daily News* 21/8/1969, *PE Evening News* 21/8/1969, *Suidwes Afrikaner* 22/8/1969)

drama), and for that reason these actors, although all white, acted together in scenes, with some of the whites acting as Coloureds. This phenomenon was mostly ignored by the press with only one reference that could be found (*The Eastern Province Herald* 15/10/1969). The little attention granted to this situation could have resulted from the ease with which the white actors passed as Coloured people, or that the audiences were so used to this dispensation that it did not merit comment.

### 5.3.1.2 Audiences

The film theatres in South Africa were open to the public according to the existing separate amenities law, as all public amenities were subject to, namely separate theatres for whites and non-whites. In selected “white” theatres, a separate space was sometimes dedicated for non-white viewers and although the same copy of the film *Katrina* was shown to all, these viewings therefore mostly took place in segregated audiences (*The Graphic*, Durban 11/7/1969). In Johannesburg, the film was released to Coloured audiences two days ahead of the release to the white theatres (*The Rand Daily Mail* 25/7/1969). In South West Africa (Namibia), Coloured people were also not allowed in all-white theatres and some Coloured viewers were shown the door on occasion of a *Katrina* evening show (*Die Suidwester* 22/9/1969).

### 5.3.2 The Image of the Afrikaner

A prominent theme reflected in a section of the Afrikaans press was the way in which the Afrikaners were depicted, according to readers and contributors/reviewers, as “backward” (*Die Transvaler* 13/8/1969, *Die Suidwester* 16/7/1969).

Most of these views were in reference to “Meneer Brink”, the father of Alida and his son, who are pictured as from the lower middle-class income group. Brink is pictured as a staunch supporter of the government policies, but also as a concerned and loving parent who had raised his two children as a dedicated single parent after his wife’s death. According to the criticisms, he (and therefore the Afrikaner) is pictured in an insulting way as a stupid bully (*Die Transvaler* 13/8/1969, *Die Suidwester* 16/7/1969).

The way in which morality of the Afrikaner was portrayed was attacked as a “weak kind of Afrikaner that stumbles across the colour line” (*Ster* 12/9/1969). According to some criticisms, the Afrikaner churches were also “pictured in a bad light” (*Ster* 29/8/1969), although the churches were mostly absent in the film and played no role in the film. The churches were, nonetheless, hereby implicated as a central part of the Afrikaner identity.



### 5.3.3 Coloured Identity

The role of the Coloured people on all levels of society was discussed widely in the media. The moral right of a “white” producer and director to present a film about Coloureds; the credibility of the content; the question of Afrikaner identity; the split in the Coloured identity, as well as the absence of criticism of the apartheid policy and government views on Coloured identity were issues that merited media coverage.

The criticism levelled against the producers can be summed up by the following excerpts: “It is the white man discussing the Coloured man ... It is the white man in a clinical race laboratory, not the patient telling us how he became a patient” (*Die Beeld* 13/7/1969), and: “Imagine how we as Coloureds feel – the subject matter of an evening’s entertainment ... It is a real pity *Katrina* got through. I do hope we are not on store for a string of ‘racial pictures’” (*The Natal Mercury* 1/7/1969). “If the government had itself commissioned this film it could not be more satisfied about its adherence to the colour line” (*Natal Daily News* 24/7/1969).

However, on another occasion, at a separate showing to a “non-white” population in Johannesburg, the mostly Coloured audience gave the film a standing ovation (*The Rand Daily Mail* 30/7/1969).

It became clear that different views about the Coloured identity amongst Coloured people existed and was discussed in the press. In certain newspapers, the possibility of the Coloured people having an Afrikaner identity was attacked and such a possibility was denied (*Hoofstad* 5/8/1969). However, the opposite view was also expressed by some: “Very little is made of the fact that the Coloureds have the same religion and language as the whites” (*Pretoria News* 17/9/1969), and it was pointed out that in a 1967 report about Coloured people in Eersterust in Pretoria it was found that the language of ninety-two per cent of all Coloured families was Afrikaans (*Hoofstad* 5/8/1969).

These two diverging views manifested in the press in an array of contributions. The view by Adam that “I also want a better life for my people, but they must walk a straight life, be honest and work hard. The laws of my God do not advocate hate and violence” (*Die Transvaler* 13/6/1969) was seen as “proof that the Coloured must be proud of himself [sic] and that he must keep and protect his identity” (*Dagbreek* 29/6/1969).

From the Coloured community, this view was supported by some who proclaimed that the film is “true to reality that cannot hurt anybody ... *Katrina* is a symbol of Coloureds trying to be white, but who rather want to protect their own identity”, and Adam September became the spokesperson “for the emancipation, through their own effort, of the Coloured people”



(Opinions from self-proclaimed Coloured people in *Die Suidwester* 18/7/1969 and *The Rand Daily Mail* 25/6/1969).

In most of the English press, a different view was expressed, and opinions were more critical of the film and its “adherence” to government policy. “Here stands, stripped to the raw, the white man’s image of the Coloured nationality” (*The Sunday Times* 21/9/1969) and “The emotional trauma of the Coloured is never exposed” (*Pretoria News* 17/9/1969).

A different view was simultaneously expressed from the Coloured community in the form of criticism, as expressed by the well-known poet Adam Small: “I do not know such people” as portrayed in *Katrina* (*Die Volksblad* 19/8/1969). More opinions included that “(t)he film makes me sick. It was an assault on my dignity as a Coloured” (*The Cape Argus* 12/9/1969); “I walked out of the cinema and so did my friends, the humiliation was too much”, and the film “enhances the image we are building overseas. That of separate development and racial harmony” (Neville Alexander in *The Cape Argus* 12/9/1969). After a pre-show arranged by the Coloured Boy Scouts, Adam Small commented that the film was excellent, but marred by Adam September’s group identity (*Die Volksblad* 19/8/1969).

The indignity levelled at Coloured people by the film by the simple fact that they had to defend their existence as persons and not be seen as “Coloured” people, became obvious. The point underlined by the film was the perception that Coloured people are different in identity and culture from white Afrikaners, and this point was brought home to audiences by the portrayal of the people and their circumstances. The indignation voiced by a significant number of Coloured viewers as a reaction to the film served to underline that this was the view perceived and offered as reality and as a statement by the producer.<sup>224</sup>

### 5.3.4 Content: Policy or Love?

The producers claimed that the film was “not political” (*Die Volksblad* 24/10/1968), but should be seen as simply a “love story” (*The Public Servant* 4/1969), although it was mentioned that the “love” was across the colour line (*Die Transvaler* 8/3/1969).<sup>225</sup> In the words of Alan Paton, a controversial South African writer, the essence of the film was revealed as “without doubt the best made in South Africa”, but the film poses deep and disturbing questions. “It also perpetuates the myth that there is a Coloured people, and that their future is great and glorious if only people would not desert to those who are not their sort-only progenitors,” (*Natal Daily News* 3/9/1969).

<sup>224</sup> The producer portrayed the social and political circumstances he saw, heard and found, as seen through his perspective.

<sup>225</sup> Love across the “colour line” was a political issue during this period. The film can therefore not be viewed as non-political.

The political content was also underscored by the question: “Did Mr Nofal wield his art with such telling effect that he shocks conscience into realization of what our laws and prejudices mean in terms of human suffering and humiliation?” (*The Natal Mercury* 21/6/1969). The complicated social consequences of love across the “colour line”, of “instant colourisation” was put in front of the government, in the words of Kimberley in the film: “You made the Coloureds, you made the laws, you find the answers”, adding “now ask your God for a solution” (*Natal Daily News* 4/7/1969). In the words of a Coloured contributor to a newspaper: “All that this film showed to me is the cruelty and injustice of the racial laws” (*Dagbreek* 29/6/1969).

From a sector of the Afrikaans press, the opposite reaction was becoming clear. The editor of *Hoofstad*, Dr Andries Treurnicht, warned the producers not to proceed with films that blunt the South Africans’ “colour consciousness” (*The Rand Daily Mail* 25/6/1969), and that colour differences were discussed as a reality in Southern Africa, which for centuries had dictated a way of living for each group apart and separate and that differences were contained in much more than colour, they are drawn “through the heart” (*Die Huisgenoot* 9/4/1969). According to some opinions, religion was being used to advance integration and bloodshed (*Ster* 29/8/1969) and separateness was seen as the way to save the “Afrikaners” (*Die Landstem* 21/9/1969).

The role of God in creating separate races and demanding obedience to this was repeated often (*Ster* 29/8/1969), *Die Transvaler* 13/6/1969), while an opinion was added that God also dictates the “nationality” of people (*Ster* 29/8/1969) and that Katrina’s woes and tragedy were in that she did not stay true to her own group, thereby upsetting the natural way of life (*The Star* 29/8/1969).

Only a few opinions could be found that explicitly asked the question: “Where is the heroic revolt against the Immorality Act, the tragic rebellion against unjust prejudice? There is only obedience and acceptance” (*The Star* 6/8/1969). “Nobody, in other words, rocks the boat,” (*The Natal Mercury* 17/6/1969). The political content, although sometimes noted and commented on, did not elicit in-depth comments and arguments.

### **5.3.5 “Verlig/Verkramp”**

It became clear that the “verlig/verkramp” division amongst Afrikaners was by now increasingly reflected in the Afrikaner press as well as in a section of the English press. High praise for *Katrina* from the editor of *Die Beeld* (Schalk Pienaar), an Afrikaans newspaper that was positioned on the “verligte” side, was reported in which Pienaar projected that any censorship will be political in the “broadest sense of the word” (*The Cape Times* 2/6/1969).

The film was described as “excellent, necessary, and a mirror image” of reality, with a plea to release *Katrina* abroad (*Die Transvaler* 13/6/1969). It was also described as a breakthrough, as a product from within the Afrikaans culture that was unthinkable five years earlier (*Dagbreek* 29/6/1969). *Katrina* was called a heroic film that lays a charge against the whites (*Dagbreek* 28/9/1969), who through all the years, to their shame “hated, despised and denigrated” the Coloureds (*The Cape Argus* 14/1/1970).

The parallel was drawn between this film and the *Sestigers*, who embodied the “verligte” side of Afrikanerdom (*The Cape Argus* 14/1/1970).

The confrontational scene in the film between Mr Brink (father) and Alida (daughter) was seen that it “dramatically and convincingly conveys the unending tragedy that is the core of this courageous film’s theme” (*The Sunday Times* 29/6/1969), while from an Afrikaner “dominee” came the comment that “the Afrikaners should never close their eyes to the frustrations of the unanswered question Coloured people have to face, as portrayed in *Katrina*” (*PE Evening Post* 18/6/1969).

On the “verkrampste” side, the criticism could be found on many levels, starting with the opinion that the dialogue is mostly in English (*Ster* 29/8/1969, *Die Transvaler* 25/6/1969, *Die Vaderland* 10/7/1969). An unsuccessful effort was also made in the Parliament by the “verkrampste” side to debate the film with the object of banning it from the public on political grounds (*PE Evening Post* 9/6/1969).

Criticism from the conservative side (“verkramp”) by various participants (*Ster* 29/8/1969) included the views that the film was based on humanism; that it is a communist onslaught against the “volk” through art; that this film was an effort to blunt colour differences (*Hoofstad* 25/6/1969), while *Katrina* propagates the “sin” to have a relationship across the colour line (*Ster* 29/8/1969).

The “verlig/verkramp” debate manifested clearly in these comments and opinions, underlining the growing divide opening up in Afrikaner midst.

### 5.3.6 Media: Conclusion

The expectations created in the press before the release of *Katrina* was accompanied by attacks on the producers for not being true Afrikaners, and these attacks only increased after the release of the film (*Ster* 29/8/1969, *Die Beeld* 7/9/1969). A protest march against the film was held in Pretoria (*Die Beeld* 7/9/1969) after the conservative editor of the “verkrampste” magazine *VEG* issued warnings to the public that “this kind of production is something we in Pretoria will not tolerate ... there will be mass protests” (*The Sunday Times* 24/8/1969).

The producers reacted that this film was only a portrayal of the real facts of life (*The Rand Daily Mail* 21/8/1969) and that it is “a tragedy that English-speaking people have virtually abdicated from public affairs in South Africa” (*The Natal Mercury* 1/7/1969, *The Rand Daily Mail* 1/7/1969, *Hoofstad* 1/7/1969). There also were efforts in South West Africa (Namibia) to stop the film being shown to “non-whites” (*Windhoek Advertiser* 23/7/1969).

When plans were announced that *Katrina* will be submitted at the Cannes Film Festival and will also be distributed through Europe and the United States (*The Star* 21/6/1969), an outpour of negative reaction manifested in a section of the Afrikaans press. Without any irony, it was reported in *Ster* (29/8/1969) that the danger exists that the world will see the unjust laws and that the backward mentality of Coloureds and Afrikaners makes the content of the movie unacceptable. Also without irony it was opined that the “international cry for equality and freedom of association, and that you may love who you please” will only be reinforced by such viewers (*Ster* 29/8/1969). According to an Afrikaner prominent in cultural circles (Dr Hennie Terblanche from the Genootskap vir die Handhawing van Afrikaans), external distribution had to be banned as it will cause “more venom about colour policy” (*The Star* 21/6/1969). He also suggested that the Members of Parliament should be shown the film before it would be presented to the Publications Control Board. This effort to gain political meddling was unsuccessful (*Die Transvaler* 13/6/1969). From the “verkrampste” perspective within the Afrikaner churches, a spoke woman’s view was that “it is a pity that the film was ever produced and it should not be seen outside South Africa (Mrs D Smit in *Die Transvaler* 28/8/1969).

The film was produced with international distribution in mind (*Natal Daily News* 15/10/1969) and from the “verligte” viewpoint amongst the Afrikaners, this was supported.<sup>226</sup> In South West Africa (Namibia), the film was shown in separate theatres and separate drive-in theatres, as in South Africa (*Die Oosterlig* 21/7/1969), and the film was booked to be shown in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) where, if it would be banned by the Publications Control Board, it would have had to be submitted to the Rhodesian censors (*Rhodesian Herald* 20/6/1969).

Reaction in the media can be described as having been enthusiastic, involved and outspoken, with conflicted opinions.

## 5.4 Conclusion

The story of *Katrina*, trying-for-white, was a reflection of the time in which it was produced. The story offered a perception and a perspective about the realities of indignities suffered

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<sup>226</sup> As was confirmed by the well-known *Sestiger*, Chris Barnard (*Die Huisgenoot* 9/4/1969).

and lives destroyed in the simple or normal quest for love. Because it was love across the colour line in South Africa in the 1960s, nothing about the reality of the two relationships pictured can be referred to as “simple” or “normal”.

The various laws prohibiting such love were enforceable, but even more importantly, the values of separateness from which these laws emanated, were part of the culture. The film portrays the way in which these mores and values within the culture determined the actions that resulted.

The most important theme exposed throughout *Katrina* was the tragedy and indignity experienced within the Coloured community as a direct consequence of the policy of apartheid. The sadness was exceptionally well projected by the use of music throughout, but specifically during Paul’s night of anguish by the song “Don’t you feel like crying?”

Reaction of audiences to this theme of injustice leading to the violations of human dignity was difficult to find in the press reports and reviews that followed. Only a few incidences were mentioned whereby the pettiness of these laws was illustrated. In a remark on this theme, a retired white professor from the University of the North (for black students only) recorded how he greeted a black, previously fellow professor, with a handshake on bumping into him on a city sidewalk and thereby causing such mayhem to the passers-by that nearly brought the traffic to a standstill (*Dagbreek* 29/6/1969), but no real in-depth debate about moral injustices caused or indignities caused by the policy were reflected in the media.

In contrast, the main theme that became the focus of mostly the Afrikaans press was the way in which the Afrikaners were seen to have been depicted as “low class”, and secondly the censorship issue as a moral judgement of who should have been allowed to see the film.

That such across-the-colour-line relationships were perceived as not possible, and that this situation was the cause of indignity, was voiced in the film by Alida, who says to her father that she and Paul may “go to another country where they could be accepted as human beings and where they could be married” (*The Rand Daily Mail* 30/7/1969). Another level of indignity was unintentionally opened as one perceived by the Coloured population of themselves as being presented as objects of entertainment and recreation for a night out. It became clear that in the interaction between film and audience the main focus of the film, namely that of the indignity caused by injustice, was largely missed by the majority of audiences, for which the quest for identity and other themes became the main issues.

During the production process of the film, another level of indignity manifested. This escaped the audiences, who hardly commented on the proscribed use of white

players/actors acting as Coloureds in the leading roles. Only one comment could be found about this situation that was proscribed by law (*The Eastern Province Herald* 15/10/1969). In further humiliation, during the birth scene, where the live birth of a Coloured baby is shown, no Coloureds were allowed in the all-white hotel where the scene was being filmed. The producer had to secretly smuggle in the Coloured mom-to-be and her aunt (*Die Oosterlig* 11/11/1969), as well as some of the Coloured film crew members. They were smuggled into the hotel by way of the “goods” staircase. The only comment on this situation was a reaction to the fact that filming a live birth “was absolutely scandalous and should not be allowed (*Die Beeld* 24/11/1968), missing the real occurrence of humiliation to the participants on account of their colour.

This film was mostly hailed as an art film, with superior technical qualities. As art, the film observed and interpreted reality according to the perceptions of the producers. They used the everyday events of real life in Cape Town and surrounding areas to emulate the contents.

The anticipation of a bleak future, as pictured in the closing scene, leaves the viewer with little hope. The moral crisis experienced by the priest and his choice of the familiar, of compliance to the laws of the land and the colour of his skin above his love for Katrina causes desolation. By this action, he not only acts against his own dignity as a human being, but degrades Katrina’s humanity, the Coloured woman whom he had pronounced to love when he had perceived her to be “white”.

The film hereby asks the question of the relationship between love and the dignity of the loved one, and how, by prohibiting love, the system prohibited the acceptance of the dignity of some.

The reaction of the audiences in the media reflects a dissonance with the message brought to the screen. The issues which were reacted to were not in essence the injustices and tragedy unmasked by *Katrina*, but a series of discussions and debate that centred on Afrikaner identity and a number of lesser issues, as discussed. The film was seen by some as a threat, but mostly for reasons not pertaining to the immediate tragedy that resulted from the current policies, but rather that it could have “a detrimental effect on the soul of a nation ... art opening up the possibilities of influence from outside as in the days of Read and Van der Kemp” (*Ster* 29/8/1969).

## Chapter 6: Jannie Totsiens/Johnny Farewell

### 6.1 Storyline

*Jannie Totsiens* is an allegory that could also be classified as a psychological thriller, depicting the South African society of the 1960s as a madhouse.

The complete film is set in a rural mental institution, located in an old and gracious farmhouse out of town where the city never enters. The “inmates” have been living their various troubled lives together, but have formed a “family” with its own dynamics. The underlying tensions are present from the start. One day, a new patient is admitted, namely Jannie, and thereafter everything changes, as events take an irreversible turn.

The cast of characters include Jannie, a young and brilliant mathematics professor whose mother had him admitted to the care of the clinic because he had suffered a mental breakdown that has left him in a catatonic state. The smothering personality of his mother overwhelms Jannie’s behaviour, but her picture is on his bedside table, which he turns upside down once he has found his voice.

Magda du Preez is the personification of the matriarch, “volksmoeder” (“mother of the nation”), who became unhinged after her troubled husband had her locked up for years in this same house that now serves as the clinic, formerly their private home. She is a sinister presence, always predicting disaster and claims that she has been born with foresight and the gift of premonition. Magda is an eerie presence in the house, controlling those around her with prophecies and evil crafts. She also keeps 213 cats that seem to be her “bodyguards”.

A judge with no name is the menacing presence of judgement and revenge. His “madness” resulted because his daughter was murdered by her own husband while he experienced the impotence of his inability to stop this happening.

Koos Liebenberg is an Afrikaner, a staunch government supporter, who suffers the terrible guilt of having blown his own brother to pieces. This happened by accident, with him being under the impression that the train he was blowing up was the train of the enemy. He is delusional, especially on the nights of a full moon, when he enacts and relives the whole tragic scene as it happened in the veld.



An English inmate, Lizzie, suffers the loss of her beloved daughter Jenny, and has not been able to come to grips with this loss. She hallucinates and sees her daughter in Jannie and in Linda. She is the English presence in the film.

Linda is a young woman who was placed in the care of the doctor by her parents after she had a relationship with an unacceptable young man (to the parents) and transgressed their sexual norms. The parents are portrayed as religious and pious, carrying the Bible around on the occasion of a condemning visit to her. She has the immaturity of a child and one wish only, namely to be freed from this house by a prince on a white horse and taken to the moon forever. The prince on the white horse becomes a total fixation on her freedom.

The last inmate is a physically disabled young man, Frans, who has only one lame arm. He was hidden away from society by his parents because they were ashamed of him. Frans is the one voice of reason, a gentle presence, filling his days by painting beautiful scenes with his toes.

The only other voice of reason is offered by James, an Indian servant. He is a calm presence, helpful, alert and taken for granted by the inmates. He is constantly being reminded of his proper place in the house and in society by Koos.

The doctor/psychiatrist in charge has no name either. He is troubled and confused, not able to heal himself, though in charge of the healing of others.

The film opens with scenes of puppets eerily portraying the faces of those inside while the music sets the stage for catastrophe. Puppets, art and icons are used throughout as symbolism to portray the various moods, to create anticipation and to proclaim doom.

Jannie arrives on the scene, brought to the clinic by his overpowering mother. He is completely catatonic and also not aware of the conversations around him. His arrival was predicted by Magda minutes before, as “destruction” and “evil” approaching.

Linda happily welcomes Jannie into their midst, making him her doll, her puppet. She is the one making and handling the puppets as a symbolic presence, throughout the film. She introduces Jannie to her wooden horse and immediately claims him to be her prince who will take her away to the moon. She falls in love with Jannie in a childlike way and as the film slowly unfolds, Jannie’s emotional and sexual development unfolds as he also falls in love with Linda. She is the reason why he regains his voice, slowly warming to her personality and attention. She is, however, irrational and her sweetness of character is contrasted by a lack of depth and judgement, as well as severe immaturity. She is the catalyst in Jannie’s

healing, but also the catalyst in his condemnation, as the final voice of consent in his being sentenced to death and being hung in the cellar.

The story depicts each inmate mostly living in his/her own reality. Jannie settles down, warms to Linda, forms a relationship with Liz that furthermore leads to his sexual awakening, and slowly moves out of his catatonic state. He is the one who finds healing, love and a voice within the madhouse, but his friendship and relationships with both Linda and Liz are doomed by the intervention of Magda, who cannot allow anybody any respite from gloom, or any happiness. Her presence is everywhere, forecasting destruction.

Just before Christmas, which is rapidly approaching, Liz arranges a rendezvous with Jannie in a romantic setting in a little covered patio on the water edge. The festive scene is set with cake and music, and moves into a romantic interlude, but the futility becomes apparent. Liz is clearly unhinged, replacing Jannie with her daughter Jenny.

One early evening, Jannie is condemned by Magda to the cellar below her room. She finds him a menace to her, and she wants to stop him from getting a voice. She locks him in with all her hungry and vicious cats, and her dementia is obvious in the way she coolly executes her verdict on him. Jannie, after being attacked viciously, escapes and finds himself in Linda's room. In a gruesome scene, Linda paints his face to be her doll and attempts to cut his mouth open with a blade, as a way to make him talk.

On New Year's Eve, the tension becomes unbearable for the inmates.

Koos is portrayed all dressed to the nines for the occasion, and that implies his dress uniform decorated with military medals. He rises to the occasion by making a political speech, filled with National Party rhetoric, but on the far right side ("verkramp"), about the ideals of apartheid. James, listening with quiet respect, reminds Koos constantly that his name is not "boy", but James, but Koos reverts back to calling him "boy" whenever he addresses him. Koos, however, displays empathy, even love, for James. He also constantly purports to have friends in the Cabinet (government) that will come not only to his rescue, but also to the rescue of all, including the country. He portrays a clownish part as the heart and soul of the New Year's party, succeeding in mobilising the judge and even Magda onto the dance floor. The big hall has been decorated with balloons and Christmas trimmings, while even a special puppet show was rehearsed by Linda for the evening as an attempt at joy. Liz joins the party dressed as a bride, waiting on the first dance with Jannie, as he has promised to her.

Jannie and Linda have in the meantime found each other and are beautifully portrayed as young lovers on the bed in her room. No overt presence of sexual relations is depicted, leaving the viewer with only the romance of young love. She, however, still acts like a child with no conception of consequences.

When Jannie and Linda join the boisterous party downstairs, Liz, who is disillusioned by what she has seen when peeping into Linda's room, has already left. She has broken open the medicine cabinet in the doctor's office and has injected herself in a last act of desperation. The viewer follows her outside, in a demented state, slowly dying in the garden while in a heartbreakingly sad way Koos, unaware of this, joyfully moves out onto the veranda, singing and dancing "Ver in die wêreld Kittie", a typical Afrikaans folk song. He remains unaware of her dying at his feet.

On New Year's morning, Liz is found dead in the garden. The mood changes as Magda instructs Koos to build a gallows. It is clear that evil has replaced peace on this New Year's morning.

Frans, in a sad scene of rejection, is shown in his room, waiting in anticipation on his parents with a painting as a Christmas present carefully created and wrapped for them. They never come.

The doctor is absorbed in his own confusion.

The scene moves to the cellar, where Jannie was previously held captive and attacked by the cats. Present are Magda, the judge, Koos, Linda and Jannie. The gallows has been built and erected in the cellar, with a hanging rope swinging eerily. In a mock trial, although perfectly real and true to the "jury", Jannie is found guilty by all for Liz's death. The refrain of "guilty, guilty, guilty" is repeated until the menace becomes true and Jannie finds himself hung by his feet to die. The refrain is continually repeated by the judge, Magda, Koos and Linda during the completion of this scene in the cellar. "Guilty, guilty, guilty..."

Jannie's efforts to escape their attack are portrayed in slow motion, but they were in vain. The judge and Magda have had their terrible revenge, with Linda joining the verdict and taking part in the decision in a playful and seemingly joyful way. She has no conception of right and wrong or, at this stage, of reality. Jannie hangs upside down, slowly turning around and around on the gallows, his view the upside-down surroundings. We see the life slowly escaping him.

In his room, Frans has finished wrapping his Christmas gift to his parents, a painting of himself *with* arms; the boy they had always wanted. He sets off to find the others, but is

horrified when he enters into the cellar. With no arms he is impotent and cannot save Jannie, but his screams alert James who calls the doctor. The doctor is on the phone with his department, unaware of the scene in the cellar, informing them that everything is calm as usual and under control. His own anxiety is, however, apparent.

Jannie is found still alive, barely, and is cut loose by the doctor and James, under the refrain of “guilty, guilty, guilty” by the others. The madness seems complete.

In a last scene, Jannie leaves the farm in a big black automobile, slowly driving away from this madness. Linda waits for him along the road, believing he will take her with him to the moon. A beautiful horse gallops away across the fence.

## **6.2 Themes from *Jannie Totsiens***

### **6.2.1 Silence**

The most important theme running throughout the film is that of silence.

Jannie entered the house in a catatonic state that was the result of his mother’s smothering actions and domineering presence. She is pictured as the person who manipulated and forced him into becoming a version of himself that left no space for his own growth and development. He became her project and her product; the youngest ever mathematics professor at a prominent Afrikaans university.

Jannie’s silence is a metaphor for those voices in South Africa that did not speak out against the “madness” that had become the “normal” in the apartheid society. All around Jannie is the embodiment of these forms of “madness”; Koos in his role as a conflicted Afrikaner, the doctor who has become impotent as a healer because of his own addiction, the staff only watching from the background, and throughout the absence of any voices from any church or religion.

He is surrounded daily by these symbols of silence and remains himself silent on all issues except for the developing love he experiences for Linda. In an irony, he is the one who finds maturity and love in an asylum, in a relationship with a perpetual child, Linda. He demonstrates this love only by alluding about it to Linda.

Essentially, Jannie remains speechless, although he did regain the use of his voice.

Frans, the young boy artist, is the one voicing the lack of love and acceptance from his parents. His humanity was never recognised by his parents, and because of his defective arms (one missing, one lame) he was viewed as not capable of living a normal human life. He became buried by them in the asylum and they did not even grant him the dignity of a

visit on Christmas Day – an event he looked forward to and for which he had prepared to surprise them with his best painting. Frans is portrayed in the film as a redemptive figure, having a voice and using it to question the absence of humanity in those around him. In his own words to Jannie: “I do not have arms, but I do have a mouth and feet, and I talk. I do not hide. Do you also want to live? It’s easy.”

The silence from the churches becomes an oppressive presence throughout the film. The single link to religion is by way of Linda’s parents who regularly visit her with a Bible under the one arm and rejection through their words. Linda had been rejected by them because of her previous sexual transgressions, and her regression into a childlike state of innocence is the result of them continuously blaming her and piling guilt upon her. It seems that she will never find redemption.

Not once is the silence mentioned as abnormal. The situation is accepted by all inside as natural, them being the “malles”, the mad ones, as iterated by Koos. The role of society in bringing these circumstances about, as contributing to their madness, is never mentioned, recognised or even alluded to by anyone inside or “outside”. The one person capable of breaking the silence by his normality, namely James, may not speak out, as he is an Indian.<sup>227</sup>

### 6.2.2 Religion

*Jannie Totsiens* is devoid of religion. Churches as institutions never become part of the storyline, while the only references to religion are presented as connections with guilt.

During the late 1960s, the voices of the Afrikaner churches had become quiet and the film unmasks this silence by mostly ignoring religion. The debates after Cottlesloe had subsided for a couple of years, while the DRC was under the watchful eye of the Moderator of the General Synod since 1970, Dr J D (Koot) Vorster, a brother of the Prime Minister John Vorster. The perception of internal as well as external threats to South Africa, as voiced from National Party podiums, had been ingrained in the voices of the majority of the Afrikaner churches.

Not only did the government during the 1960s perceive the internal racial situation as threatening to government and therefore to the Afrikaner interests, but the external threat from “communism” was perceived as real. The financial support by the Union of Socialist

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<sup>227</sup> James was a servant in the institution and had to be kept “in his place”. Job reservation was in place, restricting employment and impacted on the role anybody could play in an organisation. Already in 1954, Dr Verwoerd, at that stage the Minister of Native Affairs, was of the conviction that as for the black child, there is “no place for him [sic] above certain forms of labour” (Giliomee 2003:508).

Soviet Republics (USSR) and other East Bloc countries for the armed struggle in Southern Africa was seen as a threat to remove the South African government and was perceived by the SA government as a threat against whites and Christians.

These threat perceptions were reflected in many sermons emanating from within the Afrikaans churches. South Africa was pictured as analogous with Israel, the Afrikaners being a “chosen people” at the southern point of Africa, bringing evangelism to the country. This analogous way of perceiving one’s nation is symptomatic of a search for security in time of emergency, and was depicted in many sermons during that period.<sup>228</sup> In this way, these sermons simplified history and made the historical past (Israel) equivalent to the present (South Africa). The important function of these sermons and the perception by Afrikaners was to serve as an apology in a time of threat and anxiety (Cilliers 2006:16-17, 28).

The implication was that there is no other “nation of South Africa” except the Afrikaner “nation”, and this led to interpretations of the Old Testament to become a civil national religion.<sup>229</sup> The *others*, any opponents, are stigmatised as enemies of God, while the nation is seen as God’s friend, as was pictured by a sermon at the time: “Our nation also experiences this just so during recent times amidst terrible threats and this has not yet ended. Racial riots, the advent of a terrible anti-Christian nationalism, secret winds of communist incitement and internal violence also make us aware of problems, so that all started speaking about the problem and want to call out: “Master, don’t you care?”” *In this theological framework, the others are not only conceived in terms of demonic activity, but the nation is also conceived in terms of God’s predestining actions*” (Cilliers 2006: 36, 47, 65-66, 69).

The link between this manifestation of civil religion and nationalism is clearly exposed by the dialogue and New Year’s speech by Koos. He unmasks these perceptions in a speech he delivers on New Year’s Eve by, *inter alia*, stating that the Afrikaner will survive, but that “I

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<sup>228</sup> A study analysing the content of sermons delivered in and published by the DRC during the apartheid years was found helpful (Cilliers 2006). “Just like Jacob [who] in ancient times went to meet his brother, Esau, but not before he first wrestled with God ... Exactly so, Blood River is the place where the Voortrekkers personally met their God through the Covenant, where the Afrikaans nation attained its intimate exclusive Afrikaner-centric final acceptance of being God’s blessed people” (from a sermon published in *Die Kerkbode* during the 1960s, in Cilliers 2006:27).

<sup>229</sup> See also Deist 1990. In this way, the source of the church is no longer Christ, but the nation, resulting in Christ no longer being presented as Saviour, but as a national helper, and so Christology becomes idolised. “Then the group’s descriptive norms and prescriptive laws rule over those of God, then their own values and appeals are sanctioned and mystified as though they are from God. God Himself is held captive ‘*intra muros*’ myth. (within the mystic walls). He has to serve its establishment, maintenance, propagation and defence. Everything, and all who oppose this, who do not think, act, speak and live accordingly, are regarded as enemies” (Cilliers 2006: 57-58).

don't think it is necessary for me to warn you all about the dangers we face out there, but they will pale in comparison to the yellow peril from the east and the black peril from the north."

On the other hand, Magda, as the matriarch and pictured as a prophet of doom, only uses Bible texts to condemn all around her, specifically Jannie, whose demise she prophesies throughout.

### **6.2.3 Apartheid and Morality**

Koos is the manifestation of the conflicted Afrikaner, riddled with guilt but sure of his calling. Convinced that he will be the next Prime Minister, he finds himself in charge of the future of the sacred Afrikanerdom that he upholds.

On each full moon night, he relives the night he blew up the train carrying his brother, by accident, as the dynamite was meant for the "enemy", but he mistakenly targeted the wrong train. It is presented as a metaphor for the breach in Afrikanerdom and the harm that was done to fellow Afrikaners, and this conflicted situation had led to Koos's madness.

All Koos's talk is filled by rhetoric about his "volk", the mission to be fulfilled and the morality behind his convictions of apartheid. He delivers a speech on New Year's Eve as the upcoming Prime Minister, covered in medals as symbols of power and status, defending the country's policies and moralising about the future. In the morality he experiences as an Afrikaner, within his group, and has made his own, no shred of injustice to others exist. He displays the morality and attitude that existed within his group towards persons of other colour as follows:

Koos: "No politics now, just a speech from the heart. You all know that I fight on a daily basis with the boy. Why you ask? Stubbornness. That's why. Because of his black skin? No, not at all. No. Because I love him, we know each other well, we've known each other for a long time, just like good Christian people, he in his place and I in mine. And now I have decided that I am not going to fight my brother anymore. I know you people will probably want to stone me tonight, but, as your leader, I have to do what's right. Boy, I know you've got a black skin and I know sometimes you're a little big for your boots, but tonight I see your heart. Take my hand?"

James: "No, you said I have a black skin, sir."



Koos (crying): "I'm sorry boy. I'll never insult you again. Come on, laugh with me, tomorrow's New Year. Come on, boy, laugh!" <sup>230</sup>

The producer hereby unmasked the manifestations of "petty" apartheid in daily occurrences and the conflicting views held by Afrikaners, as is illustrated when John Vorster, as Prime Minister, shook hand with blacks in 1971. The Afrikaner Broederbond's Executive Council viewed this as an issue and even had discussions about the incident. Commenting on this, N M Eiselen, one of the so-called architects of apartheid, saw this issue as giving rise to "uncertainty, misconceptions and negative attitudes." Ambivalence is also illustrated when eighty per cent of Afrikaners disagreed with the statement that "there were no differences between whites and blacks, but only a difference in opportunities" (Giliomee 2003:553-534).<sup>231</sup>

The conflict and ambivalence within the Afrikaner community surfaced when support for the ANC and its ideals was manifested, although on a small scale, but illustrated by Bram Fischer, a well-known Afrikaner of impeccable Afrikaner roots. He never denied his roots and supported Ds Beyers Naudé in a letter in 1965: "How strange it might sound today, it is not impossible that one day we will work for the Afrikaner people together" (Giliomee 2003:533).

#### 6.2.4 The Indian Population in South Africa

James, a voice of redemption in the film, is the person who comes to the rescue of Jannie at the end of the film. He is a youngish Indian manservant, voiceless because of his race, called by the name of "boy" although he numerous reiterates that he has his own name, James. In a plea to recognise him as a person with a name, he asks forlornly: "I am a Durban Coolie, I look after the 'kleinbasie'. My name is not 'boy', please my baas, my name is James."

The inability of Koos as Afrikaner to call James by his name illustrates the indignity conferred on Indians by a system which failed to recognise the humanity of the *other*. Although accepted as citizens since the country became a republic in 1961, the petty way of denial of others' dignity by parts of the community is hereby illustrated. The film unmask the many acts of indignity that occurred on a daily basis against the humanity of Indians. Not only in daily contact, but on the broader arena of sport and international sport, acts of humiliation became "normal".

<sup>230</sup> Direct quotations from *Jannie Totsiens* are used with gratitude to Trevor Moses from the *National Film and Video Archives* for his unpublished translation of the script from *Jannie Totsiens* from Afrikaans into English, made available for the purposes of this study.

<sup>231</sup> Between two thirds and three quarter of the English elite agreed with this proposition. (Giliomee 2003:534)

The most famous South African Indian sport star of the 1960s was a Natal golfer, Papwa Sewgulum (Pretorius 2014:584). As a caddie, he was spotted by a benefactor who gave him the opportunity to play golf in Europe, where he won the Dutch Open in 1960, 1961 and 1963. He went on to become the next year's runner-up and came back to play golf in South Africa. He was allowed to golf in this country for the first time in the Natal Open, which he won. In 1965 he defeated Gary Player, probably South Africa's best golfer ever, in the Natal Open, but because of the apartheid laws was not allowed to enter the premises to accept his award. It was presented to him outside, in pouring rain, while the white players, officials and supporters watched from inside the building. This caused an outcry in the world press. After he became the runner-up in the SA Open Tournament, he was banned by the government from further participation. His passport was withdrawn, which defeated his chances of overseas participation. He died as a pauper in South Africa, not yet fifty years old (Pretorius 2014:584).

In this film, James is pictured as a sophisticated, well-dressed person, the only one reading a newspaper (*The Rand Daily Mail*) in order to have contact with the outside world. He is, however, constantly derided by Koos, who refers in an insulting way to his "white takkies" ... "making you white?"<sup>232</sup> At the same time, Koos and James share an amiable relationship, and in Koos's New Year's speech he, as Prime Minister, appoints James to his "cabinet" as the "Minister of Kaffersake".<sup>233</sup> He does this with empathy, convinced that James will be flattered, but still calling him "boy".

Koos: "James will be in my cabinet. He is not a bad kaffir. I will make him my Minister of Kaffirsake. Give him a pair of takkies, a pair of sunglasses and golf clubs..."<sup>234</sup> And then he proclaims that God loves all, even James, and even them as a bunch of crazy people in their institution.

The internal conflict at times causes Koos to react to James with no indication of respect, for example, when he sends him away to the kitchen with the words, "Your place is not here amongst the whites. Since some of you achieved Standard 6 and a pair of white takkies, you have become too big for your shoes!"

The only voice heard in protection of James is that of Liz, who before she dies, entreats Koos to "leave James alone", dignifying James by using his name.

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<sup>232</sup> "Takkies" refers to tennis shoes, which were known by all in Afrikaans as "tekkies".

<sup>233</sup> The demeaning term "kaffer" was used to refer to Africans during the 1960s by many people in SA.

<sup>234</sup> Koos remains conflicted throughout and later on also proclaims that "when I am Prime Minister, I'll drive every one of you into the sea", including James.

### 6.2.5 Guilt

Guilt is the refrain occurring throughout the film, and this comes to a climax when Jannie, condemned by all, is hung upside down to die in the cellar.

Present in this scene are all the “inmates” who, by unanimous vote, declare him “guilty”. He is held responsible for the death of Lizzie (by her own hand) on account of having left her lovelorn. In her demented state, she had claimed Jannie for herself, confusing him from time to time with her deceased daughter Jenny.

Guilt manifests in various forms, but is experienced as personal guilt by most inmates. Lizzie, because she had let her daughter die; although this could be a figment of her imagination, it does not make her experience of guilt less severe. The judge’s guilt is because he could not take revenge on all those who killed his daughter. Koos experiences continuous guilt because he blew up his brother by accident, by blowing up the wrong train, and Linda has repressed guilt because of sexual transgressions. Even the doctor experiences guilt because of his incapability to heal others, compounded by his drinking problem.

Another level of guilt is transposed guilt inside the house, where the judge found everybody surrounding him guilty on various counts. Magda finds Jannie guilty of “evil” and feeds him to her 213 cats in a gruesome scene, while she also condemns her dead husband as guilty. At the end, all guilt is transposed to Jannie, who is condemned to hang till he dies.

Another form of guilt that the film exposes is the guilt that society needs to bear for creating these circumstances, for creating the madness that led to these people being buried in such an institution and then forgotten by society. This is best illustrated by the position in which Frans finds himself as perfectly normal, but disabled. His parents felt ashamed of him being a “sub-human” child, not fitting into a “normal” society, and not worth a human life, so they buried him far away from the eyes of their community, forgot about him and did not even dignify him with a visit on Christmas Day. The message to Frans is that society does not accept the dignity of “not perfect” people, but he asserts his humanity in the words: “Yes, I walk, talk, eat, sleep and dream that I have arms, hands and arms to grab and hold things with, and that despite everything, I’m still a human in some way.”

Jannie, being controlled and forced by his overpowering mother into becoming her “ideal” child, had lost his voice while his father, in his wife’s household, had previously taken his own life. The wife, being controlling, manipulative and a product of an unforgiving system, bears the guilt for these circumstances.

Linda suffers because of her parent's rejection after she, as a young adult, committed sexual deeds that fell outside of her parents' value system. The strictness and unforgiving judgement against her, together with her own guilt for acting in this way, pushes her into a childlike state of innocence. Every time during her parents' visit on Sundays, the guilt is heaped afresh onto her, ensuring that she recedes deeper into a condition of regression. It seems that the producer hereby unmasks society as rigid, unforgiving and not capable of dealing with any inherent differences in value systems.

In another manifestation of guilt, Jannie is collectively found guilty by all and sentenced by the group. Jannie's only "transgression" is that he has found love within the madness of the institution. Jannie also is an exception, the one person not experiencing guilt or condemning others. When Jannie is found guilty, his guilt is a simple replacement for the guilt of a system that had allowed these circumstances to develop. Love is the ingredient that leads to Jannie's maturity, to his healing and to him finding his voice. He reflects normality at the end when he informs the doctor, in his normal voice, of his immanent departure. His sin, although not proclaimed as such, is that he is lucid, could love and has found his voice. He is condemned because of his normality.

The lucid comment by Frans illustrates an understanding of the need of others to effect punishment for the guilt they experience, with his words: "I tried to tell them, but they wouldn't listen. All they wanted to do was to hang someone."

### **6.3 Themes from *Jannie Totsiens* in the Media**

Expectation was created in the media for the film by the speculation that the script for the film was written by André P Brink, a well-known *Sestiger* writer (*The Pretoria News* 5/8/1969). In an interview with the producer, Jans Rautenbach, he acknowledged that he was approached by a couple of Afrikaans *Sestigers*, including Chris Barnard, André P Brink and P G du Plessis with the possibility of future collaboration. He mentioned that he will be producing a film named "Tant Koek se Hoenderhaan" as an in-depth study of six lunatics in an institution (written by Brink) and he explained that this film will be commentary on the social circumstances in the country (*Die Vaderland* 27/3/1969). The question he posed was why eighty per cent of all lunatics consisted of Afrikaners and what could be done to alleviate this? "What is a sick nation? What is a healthy nation?" (*Die Vaderland* 27/3/1969).

In certain newspapers, the film was merely referred to as a “love story” to be looked forward to (*Die Beeld* 23/6/1969).<sup>235</sup>

The Publications Control Board (under the leadership of Jannie Kruger) initially banned the film for all viewers between four and sixteen years of age and commanded a couple of changes to the dialogue (*The Sunday Times* 12/ 7/1970).<sup>236</sup> The various restrictions and changes were appealed by the producer to the responsible Minister (Marais Viljoen) (*The Cape Times* 12/8/1970), who reversed the decisions by the PCB and approved the film in its entirety (*Die Beeld* 26/7/1970, *Die Volksblad* 7/8/1970).

The ban by the PCB had a severe influence on the producer. He had received an offer from Mr André Pieterse, the vice-president of Goldwyn-Meyer, to join his film studio in the United States, and he declared to the media that “(t)wo weeks ago I would have told you it was unlikely that I would accept André’s offer. Now it is almost certain that I will and I say it is a sad day when a born-and-bred Afrikaner must consider going overseas to make films,” (*The Sunday Express* 24/5/1970). After the ban was reversed, he declared his relief and joy and his intention to stay in South Africa (*The Sunday Times* 12/7/1970, *Die Burger* 8/7/1970).

After the film debuted in Durban, it was received with enthusiasm, according to the producer (*Die Transvaler* 8/7/1970), while the possibility of an English soundtrack for overseas distribution was also mentioned (*Die Beeld* 24/5/1970).

### 6.3.1 Psychology

The initial intent by the producer to comment, through this film, on the “sickness” of the nation which he portrayed through the genre of an allegory seems to have been completely lost on the audiences, reviewers and commentators.

The content of the film was rather received as being about psychological problems of persons and how these people relate to normal society (*The Cape Times* 12/8/1970). The film has been described as “all about lunacy, misfits and the inability to communicate” (*The Daily News* 26/6/1970), as a psychological film (*The Rustenburg Herald* 30/10/1970) that analyses “schizophrenic [sic] and other psychological states” of the inmates (*The Sunday Express* 26/7/1970, *The Rand Daily Mail* 4/1/1971), as well as a “cerebral piece of work” where everybody is delusional (*The Star* 17/7/1970, *Die Transvaler* 17/7/1970). In various polls conducted, the viewers, including medical doctors and personnel, agreed that this film

<sup>235</sup> The newly formed company by Jans Rautenbach, *SEWENTIG*, produced this film as its first project with a planned release during May 1970 (*Die Suidooster* 15/5/1970 and *SA Film Weekly* 23/4/1970).

<sup>236</sup> The words “swart vel” were removed, but “kaffer” remained. The *Suid Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns* approved the film with 100% approval (*The Rand Daily Mail* 1/6/1970).

was only about the psychological analyses of illnesses (*Die Transvaler* 14/7/1970, *Dagbreek en Landstem* 24/5/1970), while discussions between professional medical experts centred on the incidence of mental illnesses (*Dagbreek en Landstem* 24/5/1970).

Only one report could be found in the media where a certain understanding for the content as offered by the producer was displayed. In a review (by Renske Koen), she maintained that the film had found society directly responsible for the existence of such mental illnesses, with a complete inability to understand what it had created (*Hoofstad* 14/8/1970). Even this opinion did not display complete understanding of the allegory offered.

One more perspective offered was that society shuns its responsibility by concealing such people in institutions from where they could not impact on society and where society is shielded from daily contact and liability towards the mentally ill (*Dagbreek en Landstem* 19/7/1970).

### 6.3.2 Normality

The only normality reflected on in the media was where the film was seen as a “love story”, where love was found as the ingredient that heals (*Die Beeld* 17/7/1970, *The Sunday Times* 19/7/1970).

Whereas no further normality was found (*Die Beeld* 26/7/1970), the crippled boy Frans was singled out by two reports as “normal”, where Frans viewed himself as impotent in helping Jannie: “I’m your friend Jannie, but I can’t help you – I’ve only got one arm” (*The Sunday Times* 19/7/1970). In his claim to be seen as a normal human being, he reiterates: “I am a cripple, but I live, I talk, I work, I am a human person. I am not ashamed of myself; God has made me” (*Die Suidooster* 15/5/1970).

The only remaining normalcy once remarked upon was that of James, the Indian orderly, seen as a normal balanced person, who “serves and observes the Whites as they live out their fantasies” (*The Sunday Times* 19/7/1970).

### 6.3.3 Confusion

The film left the audiences mostly in the same state of confusion as experienced by the inmates. At the opening night, the previous filmmaker and partner of Jans Rautenbach, Emil Nofal, reported that after the first public viewing, the audience remained seated in silence for two minutes and then left the theatre in complete silence (*Die Beeld* 19/7/1970).

This incapability to understand and digest the content of the film was clear from most reports. Examples include opinions that “everything is mixed up and devoid of meaning” (*Die*

*Vaderland* 5/11/1970), “totally confusing” (*Die Beeld* 26/7/1970), “mixed-up elements, no context and storyline, mosaic” (*Die Transvaler* 17/7/1970), “no story, only a mixed-up business” (*Hoofstad* 21/9/1970) and “a mess” (*Die Burger* 16/9/1970). The film was also described as “without plot, theme or message ... an insult to even average intelligence” (*The Pretoria News* 11/9/1970).

For some viewers, the film offered a threat and should be forgotten, “should be dumped into a fire” (*Die Burger* 16/9/1970). It was also called “satanic” by some, as well as “absolutely nerve-racking” (*Die Burger* 15/9/1970).

#### 6.3.4 Guilt

The use of the theme of guilt as one of the main themes in the film was only commented on twice in the media (*Die Vaderland* 17/7/1970), and in one case as an “obsession with guilt” (*The Rand Daily Mail* 17/7/1970).

In a number of reviews or opinions, comments were made about specific guilt, manifesting in Koos (for blowing up his brother), the doctor’s guilt for his incapacity to cure his patients or himself (*The Pretoria News* 5/8/1970), Linda’s sexual guilt and the judge’s self-imposed guilt (*The Pretoria News* 5/8/1970).

Jannie, who remains silent, even after he got his voice back, is identified as the scapegoat for the guilt of all, as the normal person who does not talk (*Die Beeld* 26/7/1970).

#### 6.3.5 Film as Art

*Jannie* was hailed in the Afrikaans as well as the English press as an art film, and scored one hundred per cent as such (*The Rand Daily Mail* 17/7/1970), while being called “brilliant” by others (*The Sunday Express* 24/5/1970, *The Sunday Times* 19/7/1970). It was also hailed as “our best film yet, including all South African films” (*The Star* 17/7/1970).

Two important aspects of the film merited special attention, namely the role of symbolism created by the producer through the use of puppets and paintings (*The Star* 17/7/1970), while the soundtrack was widely reported and hailed as excellent.<sup>237</sup> The music was described as beautiful, haunting, dramatic and lyrical (*Die Volksblad* 7/8/1970, *Die Beeld* 19/7/1970, *Springs and Brakpan Advertiser* 19/6/1970, *The Pretoria News* 16/6/1970).

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<sup>237</sup> The songs were written and performed by a young South African twosome “Tony and Jan”, under the directorship of Sam Sklair (*The Star* 25/7/1970).



### 6.3.6 Media: Conclusion

The film was misunderstood by the audiences, and this failure to perceive the content manifested in shallow reporting. Guilt, although recognised as one ingredient, was treated in a superficial way, while the political content of the film was grossly ignored or not even perceived. The brutal way of society in dealing with disabilities, with real hurt, indignities and need was not commented upon, with one exception only, where the constant referral by Koos to James as “boy” was mentioned (*The Sunday Times* 19/7/1970). It seems as though a near-complete dissonance existed between the content intended by the producer for the film and the way in which the film was perceived by viewers. `

Although most press reports were critical and displayed confusion with the content, the film was hailed by some as a brilliant art film.

### 6.4 Conclusion

*Jannie Totsiens* was released to audiences amidst expectations created by the media of a “love story”. The producer did previously mention his intention of creating an allegory, a story representing his view of the South African society, but these comments were either ignored or lost. It could be that the film’s genre of political modernism, which was developed in Europe during the 1960s, was an unfamiliar genre with the audiences and that the film was ahead of its time for the level of sophistication of the audiences in South Africa at that time (Botha and Steinmair 2006:75).

The public seemed to have been stunned into silence by that with which they were confronted. After the initial silence subsided, reports, reviews, opinions and discussions followed in both the Afrikaans and English media. The soundtrack of the film was in Afrikaans only, but the film received approximately equal coverage in both languages in the media.

It became clear from the very first press coverage that the content was lost on the viewers. The themes that received media coverage differed from the essential themes addressed by the producer, the focus of which was the unmasking of the “madness” into which the South African society was moving. Human dignity became obsolete through the political filters of the society, and this negation of dignity included the disabled, the “non-whites”, women and the mentally ill or disabled.

The film addressed and unmasked the structural violence against these people and groups of people, but also turned to focus on the physical violence enacted against the “normality” of Jannie when he is physically assaulted and hung by his feet.

The institution is depicted as a place which nobody can escape, as all the windows and doors have bars, and where no healing occurs. In Jannie's words: "Injections and pills. Thanks Doctor. I'll try on my own. Maybe my love's stronger than pills." It is depicted as a place where insanity finds no cure and all inside become more insane. It is also made clear that the insanity was brought on by existing madness: "The mad person who locked his wife up until she too became insane",<sup>238</sup> while Koos declares everybody blessed, because of the insanity.<sup>239</sup> The only redemption in this tale of insanity is found in the healing of Jannie, through the love he found inside this madness.

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<sup>238</sup> Magda's words, referring to her own situation.

<sup>239</sup> "Salig is hy wat van sy verstand af is soos ons en net hier sit."

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

The three films *Die Kandidaat*, *Katrina* and *Jannie Totsiens* originated from within the Afrikaner community and culture during the period under review, namely 1960 to 1976. These films were products of the Afrikaans culture and were accepted by Afrikaners and English speakers as such.<sup>240</sup> In analyses, it became clear that the themes exposed by the producers were enthusiastically received but mostly not understood or misunderstood, or simply ignored by the viewers. Why did this dissonance occur, given that the source of the films was from the same culture as the viewers?

In this study, it became clear that the lens used by the producer(s) in dissecting and commenting on the society differed significantly from those lenses, or filters, applied by the audiences. The lens used by the filmmaker(s) had the functions of opening up reality into deeper dimensions, to focus on issues, to clarify and highlight, while the audiences were constrained by perceptions that filtered, obscured and fragmented reality differently.

A dissonance became clear between the analyses of the themes as offered by the producers on the one hand and the acceptance thereof by the audiences on the other hand. This dissonance can be related to the nature and functions of the different lenses and filters present in society.

### 7.1 Through the Lens of Human Dignity

The unmasking of injustices in the society was achieved by these films by applying human dignity as a lens through which comment was given, using the narrative of storytelling. It might be that the “lens of human dignity” applied in this study was an unintentional consequence, as the filmmakers never intentionally focussed on the dignity of persons, but rather on the systemic and cultural injustices that led to the violations of people’s dignity.

For this study, a theoretical and functional description of human dignity was developed (Chapter 2) and used as the essence of humanity in analysing the message of the films as well as the acceptance thereof by the public. The content of human dignity, as grounded in identity, relationships and the embodied presence of God, was searched for and focussed on. The framework as offered by the four “movements” of art in society served throughout as a tool for analysis.

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<sup>240</sup> The media coverage received was percentage-wise split between the Afrikaans and the English press as follows: *Die Kandidaat* 70/30, *Katrina* 65/35 and *Jannie Totsiens* 60/40).

### 7.1.1 Observation

To observe and unmask may be a crucial function of the medium of film, and these activities can be utilised to effect significant impact on society. “Good art takes the context very seriously. Because artists are observers, they can capture the sounds and colours, the hope and despair, the vibrations and dissonances of the society in which they live as few others can. *Aesthetics grounds us in life and roots us in the earth*. It gives flesh and blood to our social and cultural contextuality” (Cilliers 2012:145).

Good art, as these films were according to all reviews, reports and opinions, asks questions and delivers commentary on society. It observes and may use observation as a tool in the process of unmasking, as illustrated clearly by the observation: “Do we dare open our eyes – as artists do – and look around us at the world? If we do, if we have the courage to observe, we will see what ‘being looked after’ by God can mean for our lives. We will have an eye for those who are suffering because of injustice and hatred in our world; we will see in a different light what is going on in our society. Dare we open our eyes and mind? Dare we observe?” (Ploeger 2002:61f).

These films observed the violations against the *self* in some of the various personae portrayed: In *Die Kandidaat*, in the person of the chairman of the board, Lourens Niemand, who refused to acknowledge his own humanity and dignity when he throughout his life disclaimed not only the Coloured lady<sup>241</sup> who had had his child, but his own deep feelings of love for her. He also did not acknowledge his own love for his son, Anton, until the very last scene, when recognition was forced upon him.

In *Katrina*, the protagonist of the story was in denial about her own humanity and dignity in her refusal to accept her identity as a Coloured person. She denied herself the way in which she had been created, denying her humanity and pretending to be another, a white, person. Also in *Katrina*, the *self* was denied by Linda’s father who, because of his political convictions, could not accept Paul, a young man he loved as the fiancé of Linda, because Paul had become “instantly Coloured”. The white priest, Alex Lewellen, violated his own dignity by his inability to accept the woman he loves after he obtained knowledge that she was a Coloured woman. Observing similar circumstances in daily life, the producer used his narrative as a tool in order to unmask such violations.

Violations against the *other* were observed throughout all three films and were illustrated by the use of symbols, art and narrative. In *Jannie Totsiens*, Jannie’s mother, unable to accept herself, her husband or Jannie, violated her own self thereby, while the doctor, unable to

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<sup>241</sup> Although uncertain, Sonja’s identity leans toward Coloured.

believe himself a worthy human being, could also not accept his own humanity. Jackie, the young fiancée of Jan le Roux in *Die Kandidaat*, was shown no respect, but instead she was treated in ways that trampled on her humanity, as she was derided for being English, for belonging to the Roman Catholic faith and for being a woman, and found unworthy of being the future wife of a *true* Afrikaner (“ware Afrikaner”). Sonja, Anton’s mother, was not even shown the dignity of recognition by her own son, or by any of those around the boardroom table. Such scenes occurred daily, as was reflected in the press, and presented through keen observation by the director.

In *Katrina*, the violations against the human dignity of the *other* formed the central theme, and the observation of the manifestation of violations against the *other* were illustrated by depicting the tragedy that ensued in the two relationships across the “colour-line”, the forced separation of living spaces and the separate and demeaning situation of job reservation in the society. These circumstances were all enforced by government policies, and the results thereof were unmasked by the producer’s portrayal of such injustices in his narrative. In its most severe unmasking, the situation was painted where Katrina showed a life-long denial of her mother, calling her “an old coloured maid of mine”.

In *Jannie Totsiens*, shrewd observation of society by the producers unmasked the role of the Indian population of South Africa in the persona of James and the way in which he was treated.

The dignity of God, as the *Other*, suffers in all situations and circumstances where the dignity of a human being suffers, and this was observed and was also related directly to the violation of the church of God on earth. The priest in *Katrina*, through his inability to adhere to his faith in God, made God the object of ridicule and incredibility, trivialising his faith and God.

The ways in which the dignity of persons in society was violated were observed and formed the narrative and the “message” of these films. The films, by their presentation of the beautiful country through the unintentional lens of human dignity, underlined the observation that “(w)e live in a world of immensely beautiful and wondrous things. This same world, though, is also terrifying. Side by side with senseless loss and despair lies the mystery and beauty of being” (Saliers 2002:6).

### 7.1.2 Interpretation

The artist endeavours to bring observed reality into the context of the multiple realities that exist for different persons within one circumstance, or culture, in time and place. Film may play an important role in opening up more levels of reality, especially in the current era of the

visual, where “(in) these art forms artists no longer attempt to *reproduce* an eternal reality, but rather try to *produce* the (elusive) reality themselves-onto the point of madness (Cilliers 2012:38).<sup>242</sup> The interpretation of sickness within society may also become exposed when the prejudice and negative perceptions that lead to a sick society become unmasked (Louw 2012:173).<sup>243</sup>

These three films interpreted the prejudices and perceptions in society by way of concretising and interpreting the violations against humanity of persons and groups in many different ways. The impact of the various “race laws” was illustrated by displaying the heartbreaking and disruptive results of love across the “colour-line” in *Die Kandidaat* (Sonja and Lourens Niemand), *Katrina* (herself and the priest, Paul and Linda) and of forced displacement (*Katrina*). In *Die Kandidaat*, the dangerous influences of ideological control were interpreted in the discussions in the boardroom, and in *Jannie Totsiens*, the society was interpreted as having become “mad”; madness illustrated in the various personalities in the mental institution but as the interpretation of “madness” in society, where the violation of human dignity was depicted mostly against the *other* and a sense of reality was lost.

In *Katrina*, interpretation of the violations occurring in society was depicted mainly against the *other* as Coloured persons or groups, and in *Die Kandidaat* and *Jannie Totsiens*, against an array of *others*.

### 7.1.3 Anticipation

The creation of anticipation, of hope, of the courage to live, can be a vital function of art and when present, can motivate and energise people to a better life of hope and the anticipation of a better tomorrow.<sup>244</sup> But circumstances do not always allow the existence of hope, as times of hardship and injustice may obscure the vision of a better and more just tomorrow. Speaking out about injustices and changes in society has long been the prophetic role of the artist. “When it comes to ‘reading the times’ artists are often light years ahead of the church and theology, reading cultural vibrations like seismographs long before the church or theologians become aware of them” (Cilliers 2012:42).<sup>245</sup> This “speaking out” may deliver hope and the expectation of a better tomorrow.

<sup>242</sup> “There exists a paradoxical mode of being in both art and religion as in both a person exists in two realities at the same time” (Cilliers 2012:23).

<sup>243</sup> “It is because of prejudice and negative perceptions (that) the society space becomes sick” (Louw 2012:173).

<sup>244</sup> “...aesthetics makes transcendence possible where all reason to anticipate something different or new became impossible” (Louw 2014:15)

<sup>245</sup> “Images make visible what philosophers and theologians only express in words much later” (Cilliers 2012:43).

Hope was offered in *Die Kandidaat* by the redemptive figure of Chrisjan, the caretaker at Boys Town who cared deeply for the boys and Jackie; by Jan le Roux, the candidate who chose service to “his” boys (troubled young Afrikaner boys) above his own ambition; by the “dominee” who on various points during the discussions offered a voice of reason and redemption; and by Anton, the *Sestiger*, who at the catharsis at the end of the film became a voice of acceptance, hope and forgiveness. Anticipation of a better tomorrow, with dignity of the self, the *other* and the *Other* was offered by these figures.

In *Katrina* and *Jannie Totsiens*, the bleak scenes were mostly devoid of anticipation and hope of a better future. The little anticipation offered for something better in *Katrina* was illustrated for her to be in her own group, to be found in the village where healing occurred for some, after the devastating circumstances in the last scene.

In *Jannie Totsiens*, the only anticipation created was centred in Jannie, who slowly obtained the use of his voice. However, he left the institution without enunciating any hope, and a strong sense of hopelessness remained. The viewer is left with the questions: Did Jannie speak out on the outside? Did anybody listen?

#### 7.1.4 Transformation

The fourth “movement” through which artists may lead the participant is the transforming process of the self or of society. These three films had a decisive transformative potential, as they broke wide open the existing prejudices and injustices of society. In order to have a significant and lasting influence, however, the acknowledgement and acceptance of the “message” by the producer is a precondition. With no acceptance or understanding of the themes that crystallised from these films, no long term influences and incisive changes or transformation could follow.

Through *Die Kandidaat* and *Katrina*, influence to transform society could have been exercised through introducing audiences to the *Sestigers* and their literary work in Afrikaans. This movement endeavoured to open up the perceptions of society to broader perspectives and views, and thereby creating hope, as the use of art, narrative, discussions and arguments offered by the *Sestigers* opened up a new view on society that could possibly have led to the transformation of society. The Afrikaner’s perception of identity could thereby have been broadened in becoming inclusive of different values and could have led to a greater tolerance of the values and lifestyles of *other* communities.

The sensitive way in which the relationships between persons from different races were depicted in *Katrina* opened up the possibility for understanding and accepting the *other*, specifically the acceptance of the humanity of the *other* and the *self*, and thereby the human



dignity of each. The sensitive and intricate ways in which relationships were depicted in the films could have sensitised the viewers to the value of love and tolerance of the *other* in relationships that defy stereotypes or prescriptive laws.

In the last film, *Jannie Totsiens*, the producer used a form of reframing, by using allegory to obtain a response. This use of reframing can be seen as “rather playful, humorous and has, one could say, a certain foolishness to it. It has been well documented that many oppressive systems, for instance, have been relativized and ultimately transformed not through violent resistance, but rather through laughter as ethical resistance and as creative response to the problem of evil” (Cilliers 2012:230). In *Jannie Totsiens*, the deadly seriousness of a sickened society that lead to madness by government policies which were on the one hand enforced on people and on the other hand embraced by society, became brutally unmasked by the use of puppets and the light-hearted playfulness of Linda, hoping against hope on her “prince on a white horse” to escape the madness.

The perspective offered by the producers opened up the potential for the audiences to see and hear the “prophet’s” voice in all three films by focussing the light on the identity of persons, relationships and the presence of God as their core humanity. The violation of their humanity becomes the violation of the essence of a person or a group, therefore violating human dignity, and these violations were brutally unmasked as everyday injustices.

## **7.2 Through the Filters of Society**

The audiences responded to these films by way of media comments, opinions, reviews and debates, but these discussions and reactions were focused mostly on different themes than those presented by the producers. This dissonance can mostly be related to the filters present in society which acted not as lenses (highlighting, opening up, shedding light and providing clarity), but mostly functioned to obscure, missing the original theme and presenting opaque and murky views. This selective perception was illustrated by a number of filters present in society, and although these filters may be identified separately, they operated together and simultaneously, re-enforcing the power of selective perception. The most important of these filters may be found in the Afrikaner identity, nationalism and ideology, economic interest, threat perception, religious dogma and group interest.

### **7.2.1 Afrikaner Identity**

One of the most obvious filters applied by society was that of Afrikaner identity. This question about the essence of such identity became a noticeable presence in the reaction that was published mainly in the Afrikaans-speaking press, where “Afrikanerskap” was defended vigorously. It is clear how the image of the Afrikaner was perceived as “under

attack” in both *Die Kandidaat* and *Katrina*, where any actions or words by Afrikaners in these films that were regarded by the majority of viewers as harming the “pure”, Christian, nationalist and loyal-to-the-cause Afrikaner were criticized and seen as demeaning the “volk”. In *Jannie Totsiens*, also the mentally disabled, or in the case of Frans, the physically disabled, were accepted by the viewers as not belonging to the mainstream, but being separate from the “ware Afrikaner”, the true Afrikaner.

The identity of the Afrikaner during this period may be described as having been captured within an enclave, where “enclave” can be described as a place (figuratively or literally) where a dissenting minority strives to keep a social unity within strong boundaries (Nell and Cilliers 2014:93-108). Such an enclave may differentiate itself from other groups in order to create internal cohesion and may often operate with syndromes of anxiety against perceived threats and with efforts to maintain the “purity” of the enclave (Aaboe 2007:65).

This view of threatened identity formed an influential filter that interacted with the other filters present.

## 7.2.2 Nationalism and Ideology

Many comments from viewers reflected the strong influence that the policy of separate development had as an operating filter when confronted with these films. These prevalent views amongst Afrikaners reflected the government policy which had clearly been illustrated by the words of political leaders of the day.<sup>246</sup>

The consequences of these policies were depicted in the narrative of these films, but no direct rejection of this policy could be found. In some cases, the timeline for the implementation of these policies was seen by supporters as taking too long to obtain the objects of the policy, and it was clear that the majority of viewers accepted that “in time” moral justice will prevail, echoing the policy that “(i)t may take a long time ... Now we on this side are following the moral course of trying to bring about human equality through the creation of separate nations”.<sup>247</sup> Not once were the consequences of these policies rejected by the viewers as inhuman.

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<sup>246</sup> From Parliamentary speeches, Verwoerd can be quoted: “The objectives of this policy are the uplifting of the peoples concerned, their emancipation from the guardianship of the governing white people, their attainment of self-determination as peoples and respect for their fundamental human rights as individuals,” and according to John Vorster in 1966: “My appeal, therefore, to every leader of every population group is this: the best service to humanity lies in service to one’s own people. Every population group has what is its own, which is beautiful and which can be developed,” (Landman 1968:27, 28).

<sup>247</sup> Verwoerd in an explanation of policy in Parliament (Landman 1968:137).

The threat to society as depicted by these films was rather seen as a threat to the policy of separate development or apartheid. Some of the situations portrayed daily stigmatisation and “because of discrimination and stigmatisation humans become isolated from one another. Co-existence becomes further endangered by the development of a ghetto mentality, i.e., an acceptance of victims of the attempt to separate people along the lines of prejudice and suspicion (segregation) (the ideology of separatism)” (Louw 2012:170).<sup>248</sup> This prejudice developed by these policies became a filter, as is clearly illustrated by the absence of reaction to the situations in the films that opened up the possibility for such discussions, *inter alia*, the boardroom discussions in *Die Kandidaat*, the tragedies of both relationships in *Katrina* and the speech by Koos in *Jannie Totsiens*. The silence about James’s situation in *Jannie Totsiens* furthermore reflects this filter clearly.

The racial issues in Afrikanerdom, reflected in the discussions of the Broederbond at the time, were centred around the possibility of handshakes between black and white (which would give rise to “uncertainty, misconceptions and negative attitudes” (Giliomee 2003:553), or “mixed” dancing.<sup>249</sup> These petty racial situations became the norm and formed one of the filters through which the films were viewed, and these situations were never perceived in the reactions in the press as forms of violence. The policy of apartheid was entrenched in the society, and although these violent acts were unmasked by the producers in the stories told, society had become conditioned to the circumstances and “after some time, direct violence is forgotten, slavery is forgotten, and only the labels show up, pale enough for college textbooks: ‘discrimination’ for massive structural violence and ‘prejudice’ for massive cultural violence. Sanitation of language: itself cultural violence” (Galtung 1990:295).

The policy of apartheid was accepted by the majority of Afrikaners and clearly acted as another powerful filter, obscuring the damage and destruction caused to relationships by forcing separation between groups and people.

### 7.2.3 Economic Interest

The South African economy had been undergoing rapid growth during this period<sup>250</sup> and this new enjoyment of financial success and affluence was depicted clearly in *Die Kandidaat*. No critical comment arose from the audience; not about the way these riches may have been

<sup>248</sup> “Prejudice in co-existence is related to ethnicity, race, gender and class distinctions. Linked to hierarchy and the abuse of power, the outcomes of prejudice are stigmatisation and discrimination”; and: “Because of prejudice and negative perceptions, the societal space becomes sick” (Louw 2012:169 and 173).

<sup>249</sup> Chief Buthelezi of KwaZulu and a white woman danced at a press ball which led to investigations at the “highest level”, repelled by Dr Connie Mulder, who at that stage was widely backed to succeed Vorster as Prime Minister (Giliomee 2003:554).

<sup>250</sup> Chapter 3 provides the historical context.

obtained,<sup>251</sup> or the way in which the newly rich were depicted in the films as callous.<sup>252</sup> This newly obtained financial status of the Afrikaner was unmasked, but it was never grasped by the viewers that this portrayed “a semblance of beauty, a mock beauty, in which commercial strategy, monetary gain and the right ‘label’ has (sic) the upper hand; a semblance of beauty which is nothing other than kitsch, a beautiful but dangerous lie, which has to hide the reality of life, and is therefore useful for destructive ideologies” (Cilliers 2012:87).

It seemed as though the goal of monetary growth had become a filter through which these films were viewed, with no critical arguments or even any proof of understanding by the viewers of the message that financial growth should be based on moral grounds, acknowledging the human dignity of all involved.<sup>253</sup>

#### 7.2.4 Threat Perception

As a group, internal as well as external threats were perceived by the Afrikaners, not only against their physical survival, but also against the value and belief systems and their ideology.

Numerous allegations against the mixing of the races in *Katrina*, in the across-the-colour-line relationships, were offered, as these relationships were seen as threatening lifestyle and ideology. The way in which the relationship between Afrikaners and the English-speaking South Africans, being the traditional foe, was depicted in the films, unmasked the little rapprochement that had materialised in society between the two groups during that period. The ideal of one cohesive white society remained out of reach, although by the “yes” vote in favour of becoming a Republic amongst the English speakers, the Afrikaner ideal was supported.<sup>254</sup> The pervasive and real animosity from the majority of Afrikaners towards the English was unmasked in *Die Kandidate* in the way Jackie was treated and rejected by the “true” Afrikaner foundation. Her being English and Roman Catholic was emphatically objected to as unacceptable to “real” Afrikaners, but no comment or discussions about this intolerance reflected in the media. The absence of comment on any of these scenes illustrates that “(p)atterns of thought develop due to perceptions and experiences ... Because of partiality and narrow perspectives, negative associations are stored in the mind as suspicions. Through labelling, suspicion is linked to all phenomena associated with this

<sup>251</sup> Unmasked by the producer as of dubious origin.

<sup>252</sup> Specifically the way in which the Afrikaner woman was depicted as newly empowered with financial influence and independence, and callously using this newfound power.

<sup>253</sup> In an irony, it was revealed that Adrian Delport had established his Foundation precisely because he suffered from accusations by his own conscience about the way in which he obtained his riches.

<sup>254</sup> After the election, Dr Verwoerd declared: “The English-speaking and the Afrikaans-speaking sections have become like a new bride and bridegroom who enter upon the new life in love, to create together and to live together as life-mates” (Verwoerd in Giliomee 2003:525).

experience. Suspicion manifests itself in prejudice and becomes a biased schemata (sic) of interpretation” (Louw 2012:169).

Threat perceptions as filters were clearly illustrated by the prevailing views in society of the time about “influences” from abroad, summed up in Verwoerd’s view about the possibility of opening up society to television broadcasts. In comparing the danger of television to atomic bombs and poison gas, he added that “claiming that they are modern things, but that does not mean that they are desirable. The government has to watch for any dangers to the people, both spiritual and physical,” (*Time* 20/11/1964).<sup>255</sup> The threat was illustrated by the films to be perceived as emanating from within, as in *Jannie Totsiens*, when Jannie slowly gains his voice, and he then becomes a threat; in the process of again silencing normality, Magda declares Jannie as “the enemy within us” (*The Sunday Times* 19/7/1970) and then tries to destroy him.

The *Sestigers* were attacked and proclaimed to be a threat to the morals of “good” Afrikaners by Mrs Volschenk, reflecting the views stated by the Synod.<sup>256</sup>

The government had proclaimed the biggest external threat to the country’s security to be that of the “Communist Danger” (“Kommunistiese Gevaar”), and SA was seen as actively protecting Western interests as well as its own. In his speeches and illusive comments, Koos, in *Jannie Totsiens*, reiterates this threat many times.<sup>257</sup>

Threat perception by Afrikaners, of both internal and external threats, acted as a powerful filter, as was clearly illustrated in their reactions to these films.

### 7.2.5 Religion

The influence of the three Afrikaans Reformed churches as a filter can be seen as another powerful filter in the reaction to the three films.

The doctrine of Christian Nationalism became one of the filters through which society, and therefore also these films, were viewed.<sup>258</sup> After the *Cottesloe Declaration*, dissenting

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<sup>255</sup> The South African government did eventually introduce television in 1976 with two channels broadcasting in Afrikaans and English only.

<sup>256</sup> Discussion in Chapter 4.

<sup>257</sup> Koos voices the threat as he sees this in the descriptions offered by Verwoerd: “South Africa is unequivocally the symbol of anti-communism in Africa. Although often abused, we are also still a bastion for Christianity and the Western World” (Landman 1968:117).

<sup>258</sup> This was a blending of Christianity with nationalism. “During the days of apartheid the church-going members of the DRC were told time and again that they had an anchor in analogical biblical histories. Security lay in the fact that God of these histories were on their side, against their ‘enemies’. Over many decades, and through thousands of sermons, this myth was shaped and kept intact: if the Afrikaner household acted according to (this specific interpretation of) the biblical histories, all would be well. God would secure their future” (Nell and Cilliers 2014:101).

Afrikaner voices opposing apartheid became increasingly silent within these churches, and by 1976 no more meaningful dissenting voices from within the institutionalised church were heard.<sup>259</sup> The critical voices from the religious opposition within South Africa as well as the voices from outside mostly strengthened the support of apartheid by its followers, and were perceived as a call to morality and strength of the individual for the good of the group.

Inside South Africa, black ministers found it difficult to explain the Gospel to blacks, seeing that all the actions against blacks were done in the name of Christianity, or then by people professing to be Christians (Pretorius 2014:623).

The official support of the Dutch Reformed Church for the policy of apartheid can be summarised by the words of Dr Landman in his reply to criticism from the Reformed Church in America.<sup>260</sup> The answer provided by the Afrikaans leaders of the DRC as justification for apartheid was claimed to be grounded in the Word of God. This conviction was “clearly demonstrated in pronouncements by its synods that it can justify and approve the policy of independent autogenous development, provided that it is applied in a fair and honourable way, without affecting or injuring the dignity of a person” (Landman 1968:32).<sup>261</sup> Justification was also found in the views and pronouncements of certain clergy inside South Africa who did not belong to the Afrikaans churches,<sup>262</sup> as well as by clergy outside SA.<sup>263</sup>

Criticism was received by the church, such as “(w)e marvel, however, at the ease with which you seem to accept that we do in fact endorse policies which, as described in the *Statement*,

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<sup>259</sup> From outside South Africa, the government’s policy was widely rejected by institutionalised religion. Amongst a number of actions and declarations against the policy of apartheid, the Bishop’s Conference of the Second Vatican Council was becoming a strong opposition to apartheid in 1962. The Geneva Conference on Church and Society, 1966, called on Christians to participate in justice for oppressed peoples, and this led to the World Council of Churches’ programme to combat Racism (PCR) in 1974, the influence of which was greatly felt in South Africa (Pretorius 2014:620).

<sup>260</sup> Dr Landman issued an official reply from the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in his capacity as *Scriba Synodi* and Director of the Information Bureau of the DRC. The letter from the Reformed Church was in the form of a *Statement*, dated 30/1/1967. This reply was later published in the form of a book (Landman 1968).

<sup>261</sup> This quote was taken from a statement by some prominent leaders of the DRC in March 1960.

<sup>262</sup> “This policy of apartheid or separate development is supposed to make it possible for the members of each race in South Africa to have their own homelands and pursue their own development and destiny. In principle the policy cannot be condemned.” As quoted from an address by the Archbishop of Durban, Denis Hurley in 16 January 1966 (Landman 1968:109).

<sup>263</sup> The Reformed Ecumenical Synod had stated previously, *inter alia*: “Synod states as its belief that God’s Word does not teach either racial integration or separate racial development as a universally regulative principle expressing God’s will for our Christian conduct in race relations. God’s Word speaks relevantly to specific racial problems but it cannot be simply assumed that every form of separate development is either biblical or anti-biblical; neither can it assume that every form of racial integration is either biblical or anti-biblical. The Synod declares that where members of one ethnic group or nation permanently live together with other ethnic groups within the same country, all individuals, groups and nations shall be equally accorded God-given rights before God and the law, and each individual, group or nation in the exercise of God-given rights must not violate the God-given rights of other individuals, groups or nations” (Landman 1968:133).



would so obviously violate the most elementary precepts of Christian ethics" (Landman 1968:20), and then furthermore defended as: "The objectives of this policy are the uplifting of the peoples concerned, their emancipation from the guardianship of the governing White people, the attainment of self-determination as peoples and the respect for their fundamental human rights as individuals" (Landman 1968:29). The church also made use of the views of outsiders, foreign politicians, journalists and business people in defence of their support for the government (Landman 1968:125-133). Furthermore, black South African clergy were quoted by Afrikaans church leaders as moral justification.<sup>264</sup>

It became clear that not only was the current apartheid with its "petty" apartheid practices inflicting harm, but the situation causing these circumstances of pettiness was seen by the church as temporary,<sup>265</sup> and the claim was made that the misunderstanding of the policy was because of the huge differences in circumstances in South Africa from the countries from which the severest criticism came.<sup>266</sup> It was claimed by the church, echoing the political arguments of the day, that the South African circumstances dictate this policy as in the explanation that "(w)here we differ from other churches we maintain that it is not due to a difference of opinion on moral concepts and Christian ethics, but because of a different understanding of the situation in South Africa. The problem as we see it is not one of ideals and aims but of the best methods of achieving them," (Landman 1968:34).

These views and convictions were reflected in the reaction by viewers in the media. The policy of apartheid was professed to be according to "God's will" as explained by most of the Afrikaans churches and the unmasking of violations by these films, done in God's name, were accepted with suspicion and silence from the side of these Afrikaans churches.<sup>267</sup> It

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<sup>264</sup> An article by the Rev Sol Selepe, "*Attitudes of the Bantu (Africans) towards Separate Development*" was published in *Die Kerkbode*, 27/9/1967. The Reverend argued that the government policy "is the only policy which will do justice to the Bantu as well as the Whites" for the following reasons: It has as its objective the welfare of the Bantu, racial parity depends on separate development, it is the only way to guarantee peaceful coexistence and it is a matter of justice and righteousness and therefore the Bantu choose separate development. "If we fail to listen and obey, we shall do more harm than ordinary saboteurs, for then we shall be doing our own will and will be sabotaging the will and the Kingdom of God," (Landman 1968:144).

<sup>265</sup> "At the present stage of development there are numerous control measures such as influx control, reservation of separate public facilities, and protected employment opportunities, which create problems and sometimes hardship in individual cases ... to do away with them when they no longer serve their purpose. The situation is certainly not static, but evolving" (Landman 1968: 29-30).

<sup>266</sup> The divergent views on the policy had resulted "not because of a difference of opinion on moral concepts and Christian ethics", but rather "because of a different understanding of the situation", declared by Dr J S Gericke as Moderator of the General Synod of the DRC in South Africa (Landman 1968:19).

<sup>267</sup> "*Silence is a distinct form of unjust preaching.* It either expresses fear for the *status quo*, or acceptance thereof. It stabilizes and legitimates the process that be. It presupposes a certain ethical stance, which says: the status is good, or at least bearable – even if it is in reality inundated by injustices of all sorts" (Cilliers 2016:23).



became clear through this silence that this official policy and support for apartheid by the churches were embraced by the majority of Afrikaners and acted as a strong filter through which the films were appraised.

### 7.2.6 Group Interest

A highly significant filter which was found to have functioned as a cohesion-forming force in this society can be found in the manifestation of “group interest”.

It can be argued that the dynamics of group actions differ from the dynamics of individual action, especially on the level of morality. According to Niebuhr,

(t)here is a notable difference between the moral behaviour of individuals – where there is some real possibility of self-sacrifice for others, though it is rare enough – and the behaviour of groups, families, clans, classes, races, genders, states or nations. With communities the self-interest of the group is inevitably the predominant factor and many things an individual will do, a group will do together to further its fortunes and of course, those of its members. It is therefore perfectly possible for the same person to act quite morally, according to the customs and values of their society, and yet, in relations to persons in other groups and particularly to the other group themselves, to act very unethically (Niebuhr 1960: xiv).

The patriotic individual sacrifices himself or herself for the group and is thus one of the highest symbols of morality. It is this sacrifice of an individual for a group that most social scientists call altruism. But action which the group does by means of the altruistic loyalty of the patriot may well be very immoral indeed, in fact evil, as in an unjust social situation or an aggressive war. It is for this strange reason that the very highest level of the moral, *real* altruism, may be represented by the *challenge* to what the group does, and so ultimately by the self-sacrifice of the individual in *opposing* the morality of the group, as in the rare but illuminating cases of Socrates and Jesus (Niebuhr 1960: xv).

This “group interest” manifested in South Africa during the 1960s on various levels and in various groups. Justification amongst viewers for government actions and policy was sought in group interest, as became clear in the media reactions to the films. Without contradiction, the opinions of these persons appeared to be “moral as individuals, nonetheless they join

with others of their group to act with exceeding self-concern, with oppressive ruthlessness, and with devastating destruction” (Niebuhr 1960:xiv).<sup>268</sup>

The reaction in the media to all three films illustrated the power of group interests clearly. In *Die Kandidaat*, the divide between the moral conduct of the individual and the group was highlighted in discussions around the boardroom table. The argument by the farmer, “oom” Essie, laying claims to individual moral actions towards the “kaffertjies” became lost in the counter arguments about National Party interests and policy. This underscored that

individual men [sic] may be moral in the sense that they are able to consider interests other than their own in determining problems of conduct, and are capable, on occasion, of preferring the advantages of others to their own ... But all these achievements are more difficult, if not impossible, for human societies and human groups. In every human group there is less reason to guide and to check impulse, less capacity for self-transcendence, less ability to comprehend the need of others and therefore more unrestrained egoism than the individuals, who compose the group, reveal in their personal relationships (Niebuhr 1960:xxv).

In the media reaction, most viewers never wavered from their loyalty to their “group” and the defence of particular rights of human dignity of persons from other groups was completely absent in the Afrikaans media, and only sporadically mentioned in the English press.

In *Katrina*, the viewers may be distinguished into three different groups which were clearly protecting their interests above those of individuals. From the side of Afrikaners came the comments that the film was eroding the purity of race by showing interracial relationships and that this occurrence was threatening the group, while from within the Coloured population two different groups reacted. On the one hand there was reaction by those who saw their Coloured community as their identity, which was threatened by the film, as it thereby threatened the interest of their group. On the other hand there were those Coloured people who saw their “group” as the broader, all-encompassing South African society, which was threatened by the film’s absence of critique on apartheid. The only group interest that seemed to have been important to protect for the viewers of *Jannie Totsiens* was that of the sane and abled against the “mad” and disabled persons. The confusion about the meaning of the film was apparent.

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<sup>268</sup> “Hence there can be, without contradiction, the pious slave-owner, the respectable member of a ruling class or aggressive nation, the ‘moral’ member of an oppressive race” (Niebuhr 1960:xiv).

What became clear is, as in historical examples from Europe during the middle of the twentieth century, that “what is lacking among all these moralists, whether religious or rational, is an understanding of the brutal character of the behaviour of all human collectives, and the power of self-interest and collective egoism in all inter-group relations” (Niebuhr 1960:xxx).<sup>269</sup> The role and influence of the group interest in Afrikaner unity that has been explained in Chapter 3 can be seen clearly in the media reactions to the films and acted as an important filter influencing the perceptions of the viewers about the human dignity of persons and groups.

### 7.3 The Artist as Prophet

The Old Testament role of the prophet, in declaring God’s truth and unmasking injustices in society, may be compared to the modern day role of the artist in society.<sup>270</sup>

I believe that the role of the artist in a human community is similar to that of a prophet, because the artist, like the prophet, has power to raise consciousness through presenting alternative perspectives (signs and wonders) that re-address important issues and present them in ways that provide imagination. It is significant to note, however, that often the artist seeks and speaks differently on issues of ultimate truth than does institutionalized religion.<sup>271</sup>

The artist, by his/her work, cries out in indignation, and this “crying out”<sup>272</sup> was loudly and clearly expressed by these films, which confronted the viewing public with an uncomfortable view of themselves and their society. The picture that emerged through the lens of human dignity when applied to the films became an accusation against the “normalcy” of the everyday life and beliefs, but this prophetic voice became misunderstood or ignored, as it seemed impossible to break through the complexity of filters that had developed in society.<sup>273</sup> Nonetheless, a significant reaction was created in the audience, and although the immediate reaction did not display an immediate grasp of the prophet’s “message”, it could be that in the longer term the influence was one of the factors that led to the eventual

<sup>269</sup> “The relationships between groups must therefore always be predominantly political rather than ethical, that is, they will be determined by the proportion of power which each group possesses at least as much as by any rational and moral appraisal of the comparative needs and claims of each group;” and “Nations and people go to war mainly for self-interest; and though that be the fundamental ground, they will argue that they are really defending God, their sacred tradition, or, in our secular day, peace, order and democracy” (Niebuhr 1960:xix, xxxi).

<sup>270</sup> Five interdependent and complementary modi of prophetic action was developed by Koopman as: Action by visioning, critique, storytelling, technical analysis and participation in policy formation (Koopman 2011:181-192).

<sup>271</sup> This is the view of an AIDS sufferer, Lawson, as quoted in Cilliers 2012:170.

<sup>272</sup> “Art is often crying out to be heard” (Cilliers 2012:43).

<sup>273</sup> The question was asked if the producer could be called “ahead of his time” (*Die Transvaler* 17/7/1970).

understanding of these injustices. The role of art should not be judged as of little importance, as “I have never seen a human being in whom outrage over injustice was stirred up by philosophical essays or even, to any significant degree, by newspaper reports. Far more effective in seeing the faces and hearing the voices of the victims, whether live, in film, or in imaginative literature” (Wolterstorff 2008:392).<sup>274</sup>

Through these films, by using narrative, artworks, symbols and music, the humanity of persons and groups was acknowledged, while the inhuman violations (cultural, structural and physical) against their human rights and human dignity were unmasked. By “showing up” the violations as experienced by those against whose human dignity was acted, the importance of persons as human beings was acknowledged, and thereby the presence of God in humanity as the *imago Dei* of each, was acknowledged. The artist, in this role, may be called the co-creator, co-re-creator, of God with the gift of imagination. “In its most profound sense, aesthetics is an expression of the *imago Dei*. This is not to say that we (artists), as creators are on an equal footing with God, but that through imagination, and through God’s acts of recreation we are enabled to express the fundamental characteristics of God’s revelation, namely beauty, truth and goodness” (Cilliers 2012:69).<sup>275</sup> This link between artist and creation can be summed up as: “The whole of creation is an invitation to detect meaning as a playful game: the art of toying with the elements of creation as an artistic endeavour to re-create and to move images into imagination” (Louw 2014:61).

The violations suffered by persons were shown to be violations against the *self*, the *other* and in an all-encompassing way, always against Godself. In this way the dignity, also the human dignity of God, suffered. Christ clearly demonstrated the importance of seeing and hearing in his interaction with people; the importance to see and hear the humanity of the *other*. In acknowledging the *other*, it becomes an acknowledgement of life itself and therefore an acknowledgement of God in the *other*. In seeing, hearing, acknowledging each other, the Kingdom of God may break open in the lives of people.

The endeavour by artists to make people see and hear can be described as no other than a cry for the acknowledgement of Godself. To thus bring the Kingdom of God onto earth, to

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<sup>274</sup> “*Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, full of sentimentality, was far more effective in diminishing the violations of people in the nineteenth century than was Kant’s *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Words*” (Wolterstorff 2008:392).

<sup>275</sup> Niebuhr described the creative spirit in humans as the *imago Dei* – the image of God in human beings, the capacity for self-transcendence (Niebuhr 1960:xvi). “We seem to suffer from the *tragedy of a starved imagination*. Our ability to observe with our senses is blunted and switched off; our senses are threatened to such an extent that one can even refer to a prevailing “*anti-aesthetics*” (Cilliers 2012:87).

provide the fertile space and time in which God may rest, is to open up the possibility that God may find God's Sunday rest in the lives of God's creatures.

In this way, the cry of the artist, as prophet, may be said to be to the glory of God.

#### **7.4 Concluding Remarks: Violations Unmasked**

Violations against human dignity had occurred in South Africa during the period under discussion, namely 1960-1976, as can be seen in the historical analysis of the circumstances at the time. The producers of the films under review offered their narratives to the audiences through their chosen lens, focussing on the violations observed by them as inherently present in the everyday lives of the South African community, which had at the time become a permanent cultural presence. "Direct violence is an *event*; structural violence is a *process* with ups and downs; cultural violence is an invariant, a *permanence* remaining essentially the same for long periods" (Galtung 1990:294).

The three films elicited significant reaction from the audiences, but a dissonance was found between the "message" of the films (as offered in the various themes by the producers) and the understanding thereof as manifested in the media reaction by the viewers.

The reason(s) for this dissonance can be found in the complex social circumstances of the period, which were found to have led to perceptions formed by the viewers that acted as filters through which the message was received. These filters were clearly demonstrated to have led to selective perception, which led to the message being misunderstood or ignored.

It may be postulated that the filters present in any modern society may act in this way, obstructing the clear understanding of the message by the artist, who can be said to be ahead of his time in "seeing" and "hearing" and "proclaiming" the wrongs he/she observes in society. In these films, the *imago Dei*, which can also be called the creative spirit of Godself in human beings and the capacity to self-transcendence (Niebuhr 1960:xvi), was not perceived by the audiences.

To see this dignity endowed by Godself in all becomes possible when looking through God's own eyes which is offered by grace to human beings by God's inhabitational presence and which enables us to see the humanity in every person. By applying narrative, icons, art and imaging, the filmmakers endeavoured to open up this view on society, seeing and hearing each human being as a person of immanent value before God and others. Human beings were seen through this lens by the filmmaker as creative spirits, reaching towards God,

realising themselves truly only in God.<sup>276</sup> The understanding thereof, however, was found to have been obscured by the historical dynamics that formed debilitating perceptions in this very complex, enclaved and threatened society, *inter alia* internationally lauded for the world's first heart transplant in 1967 (Giliomee 2003:576), internationally condemned through these years for the policy of apartheid, and only exposed to the wider influences of television in 1976.

It seems highly possible that the message by these prophets of society, in bringing these three films to South African audiences at the time, in the long term eventually did contribute as one of the factors that led to the changes of the 1990s in the political scenario in South Africa, whereby the humanity of persons was recognised, leading to a constitution where the human dignity and human rights of all became constitutionally protected.

Future studies may shed light on whether the dissonance between artist and society disappears when the artist confronts a society that has not become closed and enclaved, or in the situation of South Africa, a community in which the homogeneity of the society was unawares and unsuspectedly overturned into an open and diverse community. It might then be that the message by the artist, and the lenses used by the artist, become reflected in the reaction of the audience. It might then also be that the lenses and filters may become closer together in synchronisation, but the question will remain: Is God's Kingdom the reality that shapes the lenses and filters through which we view our reality?

In applying the role of filters in future social analysis, light may be shed on the underlying reasons and perceptions that form the kind of discrepancy that was found in the South African society during 1960 to 1976. Understanding these reasons, may lead to better understanding and may lead to healing within broken societies.

Another question that may be answered by further research is whether the entrenchment of a value, such as the intrinsic respect for the human dignity of persons that became protected in the 1996 SA Constitution, has led the society to mirror these beliefs and actions. It could be that the underlying divergences proved to be too great and the social dynamics too complicated for the manifestation of this value in everyday lives of the diverse peoples of South Africa.

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<sup>276</sup> "In this way, man can be moral and in a way society cannot" (Niebuhr 1960:xvi).

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Hoofstad  
Natal Daily News  
P E Evening News  
P E Evening Post  
Potchefstroom News  
Rhodesian Herald  
Springs and Brakpan Advertiser  
Suidwes Afrikaner  
South African Film Weekly  
The Cape Times  
The Eastern Province Herald  
The Graphic  
The Guardian  
The Jewish Herald  
The Natal Mercury  
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The Rustenburg Herald  
The Star  
The Sunday Express  
The Sunday Times  
The Sunday Tribune  
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